I



Faisal ibn Hussain.

IRAQ

From Mandate to Independence

by

ERNEST MAIN, M.A.

With a foreword by

LORD LLOYD OF DOLOBRAN,
P C, G.C S I., G C I E., D S.O.

LONDON
GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD
MUSEUM STREET

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1935

All rights reserved

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
UNWIN BROTHERS LTD., WOKING

FOREWORD

BY LORD LLOYD OF DOLOBRAN, P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., D.S.O.

THE history of Iraq during the past fifteen years is a history eloquent of great achievements too little chronicled and too little known. It is a story of foundations that were laid down with foresight and wisdom by Sir Percy Cox in the very wake of the advancing armies —foundations soon to be powerfully built upon by Sir Arnold Wilson and carried forward in face of intricate and ceaseless difficulty by the skill and devotion of Sir Henry Dobbs. It is a story, too, of the masterly work of Sir John Salmond and of Colonel Joyce— of the rare sympathy and knowledge of Gertrude Bell, and of the gallant heroism of officers like Leachman, Shakespeare, and a score of others, whose names will be remembered and honoured by the Arab of the Euphrates and of the Nejd long after they have been forgotten by people in England.

But this history of Iraq has more than an intrinsic interest. It relates to an experiment in statecraft of a kind never before attempted, the success of which is still in grave doubt. General Smuts' theory of the Mandate, born of the idealism of Woodrow Wilson and the realism of Clemenceau and Lloyd George, has in Iraq been worked out to its consummation. It was perhaps natural that the theory should in its application, inheriting the mixed motives of its parentage, accentuate that conflict between the two ideals of self-government and good government, which Lord Cromer, aptly quoted by Mr. Main in his preface, declared to be inherent in British policy in the East.

Mr. Main, for the first time, outside of official publications, tells the whole story of Great Britain's discharge of her mandate in Iraq. He has lived for some years in the country as an onlooker—and a newspaper editor at that—who sees most of the game, and his survey is therefore not only impartial but also substantiated by personal observation and experience. To give proper perspective to his subject he devotes an interesting chapter to the origins and conditions of the British connection with the Arabs during the war, and

emphasizes the misunderstandings that arose from the divided control of Anglo-Arab relations on the east and west of the Arabian peninsula respectively. Mr. Main, as is to be expected, supports the policy and methods adopted on the Mesopotamian side and is critical of the political activities with which Lawrence was identified. I think perhaps that his angle of vision has led him to underestimate the value of Lawrence's unique services and remarkable achievements during the latter part of the war, to which I can bear personal testimony, and at the same time to exaggerate his responsibility for the subsequent troubles in Iraq. The insurrection of 1920 was symptomatic of a far wider reaction, which accompanied the withdrawal of British troops from the Middle East and which had repercussions in India, Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey and Egypt as well as in Iraq. Nevertheless Mr. Main's thesis is interesting, and there is no doubt that the difficulties of the British officials in Iraq in the years immediately following the war were greatly enhanced by the failure of the British Government through preoccupation with other matters to decide between conflicting aspirations in the Middle East.

But it is with the subsequent period of the Mandate or of the treaties by which it was implemented that the bulk of the book is concerned. The exercise of the Mandate in Iraq, as interpreted by the British Government, involved the creation of a national administration with a representative constitution; British authority, at first supreme, gradually diminished as it was transferred with various checks and safeguards to the Iraqi executive until, with the admission of Iraq to the League of Nations, complete independence of British control was attained. The speed with which this process was carried out depended in theory upon the growing ability of Iraqi statesmen to handle their own affairs in consonance with the principles of progressive and enlightened government. In practice however it was influenced by many extraneous considerations. In 1923, for example, a press campaign in England advocating wholesale surrender of all our responsibilities in Iraq induced the Government of the day to accept a drastic, and as it turned out quite impracticable, curtailment of the period of the original treaty, which regulated the mandatory period. In 1926 this period was prolonged by twenty-five years in conformity with the condition imposed by the League of

Nations for the inclusion of Mosul within Iraq. In 1929, however, after constant agitation on the part of Iraqi politicians culminating in a sort of ministerial strike, the British Government promised unconditionally to recommend Iraq's candidature to the League of Nations, which resulted in the termination of the mandatory regime in 1932. The question that inevitably suggests itself is whether extraneous considerations of this kind have in fact been permitted to influence unduly the British Government's policy in Iraq, and whether all the responsibilities inherent in the Mandate were discharged before the Mandate was surrendered. It is when we turn to the chapter on Minorities and read of the massacre of the Assyrians by the Iraq troops at Simel that this question becomes most insistent. Mr. Main does not presume to answer this question—indeed it is a question that only the future can answer—but he provides the data on which an intelligent opinion can be based.

The prospect indeed holds some disquieting features. Apart from the Assyrian problem which is not yet solved, there are the Kurds in their inaccessible country still hardly reconciled to Arab government; there are the Shiahs of the middle Euphrates nursing religious and political jealousies; there is mutual disdain and lack of sympathy between tribesmen and townsmen; an Iraqi Air Force equipped with bombing machines and an Army willing, and apparently able with impunity, to brush aside civil control and to take the law into its own hands; there are headstrong, inexperienced and none too scrupulous politicians; worst of all, there is no King Feisal on the throne, with his unrivalled experience in the handling of Arabs of all classes, to manipulate and control these jarring elements.

But, the man in the street will ask, what does it all matter to us? The answer is that both British interest and British honour are involved. As to our interest, Mr. Main explains how Iraq has become a vital link in British imperial communications. Chaos in Iraq would sever that link and disrupt the whole system. To obviate such a disaster the Anglo-Iraq treaty of 1930 provides for the maintenance of British Air bases in Iraq territory; and so the Royal Air Force, to which in large measure the Iraq State owes its existence, is still available. Its mere presence may be enough to protect Iraq from any threat of foreign aggression, and it will no doubt have considerable moral effect on the maintenance of internal order, but its active

employment for the latter purpose is not provided for, and in this connection Mr. Main raises a pertinent question. Active intervention, it is understood, will only be authorized if British interests are threatened. But what are British interests? Almost any serious rising in Iraq may constitute a threat to British interests, and should such a rising be directly occasioned by maladministration on the part of the Iraq Government, what will be the British attitude? A great responsibility will rest on the British Ambassador and Air Force commander to ensure that British forces are not used, even passively, as an instrument of misgovernment and that considerations of interest are not allowed to outweigh those of honour. During the mandatory regime British officials set up standards of security, justice, religious and political toleration, financial morality, health and education, which are described in the later chapters of this book. While it is not to be expected that those standards will be maintained in their entirety, their complete abandonment and a relapse into intolerance, tyranny or anarchy would be a disaster for which Great Britain would be answerable to the civilized world. This has been officially admitted. The British Ambassador explicitly assured the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, when recommending Iraq's candidature to the League, that, should Iraq "prove unworthy of the confidence that has been placed in her, the moral responsibility must rest with His Majesty's Government."

The future fortunes of the Iraq State are therefore of peculiar concern to the British people. Hitherto detailed information of our dealings with that country has not been readily available, and it is impossible for us to appreciate where we stand without full knowledge of the facts. This knowledge Mr. Main has now placed within our reach, and I hope that many will profit by it.

LLOYD

30 PORTMAN SQUARE, LONDON
March 1935

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE British Government, in the conquered territory of Iraq, proceeded in 1920 to face boldly the dilemma which Lord Cromer ten years earlier had said was inherent in British policy in the East. The Englishman as Imperialist, said Cromer, is always striving to attain two ideals which are apt to be mutually destructive—the ideal of good government, which connotes the continuance of his supremacy, and the ideal of self-government, which connotes the whole or partial abdication of his supreme position.

The history of Iraq outlined in the following pages is an attempt to deal faithfully with the change from conquest to political freedom experienced by the people of Iraq during the past dozen years. Living in the country during the later years of the Mandate and into the beginnings of autonomy, having already seen two kings on the throne, having myself occupied positions of complete independence and enjoyed, gratefully and impartially, the friendship of Arab, Kurd, Jew, Christian, and British (both service and civilian), I have tried to estimate fairly the achievement of this new freedom, with its backgrounds and its various reactions.

For many of the illustrations I am indebted to Miss Marjorie Armstrong and to Flight-Lieutenant H. F. Cardwell, R.A.F. For the transcription of the Iraqi national anthem (on the following page) I have to thank Flight-Lieutenant P. J. R. King, R.A.F.

BAGHDAD



IRAQI NATIONAL ANTHEM

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Foreword by Lord Lloyd of Dolobran	3
	Author's Preface	7
	Historical Introduction	13
I.	The Land and the People	17
II.	British Imperial Communications	40
III.	Lawrence and the Arabs of Iraq	50
IV.	Anglo-Iraqi Relations	78
V.	The League of Nations and Iraq's Independence	104
VI.	The R.A.F. and the New Iraq	113
VII.	Defence and Foreign Relations	120
VIII.	The Minorities	133
IX.	Sunni and Shiah; The Holy Cities	158
X.	Internal Administration	166
XI.	Finance	182
XII.	Justice	190
XIII.	Awqaf	193
XIV.	Railway, Road and River	194
XV.	Agriculture and Irrigation	204
XVI.	Trade and Industry	212
XVII.	Antiquities and Ancient History	222
XVIII.	Education and the Effendi Problem	233
	Appendices—	
	A. The Anglo-'Iraq Treaty of 1930	237
	B. Faisal's Damascus Diary, July 1920	251
	C. Some Notes on Marriage Customs in Southern Iraq	253
	Index	259

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Photogravure Portrait of Faisal ibn Hussain	*Frontispiece*
Typical Sunni Arab in winter kit	16
A Baghdad coffee-shop	16
Carrying home firewood	24
Outside a fellaheen village; communal baking oven in foreground	24
The Shrine of the Yezidis at Shaikh Adi, near Mosul	32
Kurds in their mountains	32
Typical house-exterior, with studded door, and no windows below the first floor	48
The interior verandahs and courtyard of our pleasant home in Basrah	48
Scenes in Basrah and Mosul	56
In the streets of Baghdad	64
Water-seller filling his goatskins at a water-hole outside Zubair	72
The Shaikh's falconer	72
Entrance to the Mosque at Kadhimain	120
The Golden Domes of Kadhimain	120
Mandaean silversmiths	128
Arab coppersmiths, Baghdad	128

FACING PAGE

A Kurdish young man 144

Kurdish coolie 144

Primitive merry-go-round at a desert town's celebration of the feast that follows the fast of Ramadhan 160

Muharram procession, Ashar Creek, Basrah 160

Point-duty policeman in Baghdad 176

The desert police-patrol 176

Fisherman in Goofa, at Baghdad 200

Mihaila, with cargo of grain, on the Shatt-al-Arab 200

Cutting the ripe date-clusters 208

Baduin method of hobbling camels 208

Sea-going dhow at the mouth of the Shatt-al-Arab 216

Oxen in plough 216

Primitive water-wheels at Hit, on the Euphrates 216

MAPS

British Imperial Communications in the Middle East 40

The Kingdom of Iraq 168

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION[1]

FROM the earliest time down to about 600 B.C., the history of the country which is now Iraq is the history of Babylonia and Assyria. Before these two powers reached their zenith, their predecessors were the more ancient kingdoms of Sumer and Akkad, which for centuries had maintained their precarious civilization, holding out alternately against floods and drought. Indeed, it is a recognized fact that the ancient history of Iraq turned upon the struggle for the control of the water supply, and most of the wars and the battles and the rise and fall of kingdoms and principalities, have been dependent upon this.

Between Sumer and Akkad, from the earliest times, there was thrust forward a bastion maintaining the claim of the Elamites (who lived in central and southern Persia) to the great waterways of Mesopotamia, but in general the history of the country in these days is that of the balance of power, or the alternate defeat of Sumer and Akkad. Half-way through the third millennium B.C., the two great kingdoms came together, and the combined kingdom included, among other famous cities, the well-known Ur of the Chaldees and Kish. The joint kingdom continued to have a prosperous existence for about four centuries, when the famous law-giver Hammurabi, himself a descendant of invaders from the West, seized the power about 2000 B.C., and at a stroke made Babylon world-famous.

Hammurabi was one of the great progressive rulers of all times. His code of laws, largely extant to this day, shows a grasp of criminal, civil and commercial jurisprudence which has been excelled by few law-givers since his day. Under his strong and just rule Babylonia rose to affluence as the great emporium of trade between East and West. The city rose to heights of prosperity hitherto unknown, but its glory did not long survive the death of Hammurabi, for it was soon submerged under the tide of the Kassite invasion and for about 1,400 years remained in comparative obscurity.

During all this time the state of Assyria, based upon the town of Nineveh near Mosul, was gradually growing in strength and importance, largely perhaps because of its control of the headwaters of

[1] See chapter on Antiquities for a somewhat fuller account.

the Tigris. Between 700 B.C. and 600 B.C., Assyria was rising to its greatest power and its frontiers were stretching far to the east and far to the west. The ancient splendours of Babylonia were completely outshone, and the old city of Babylon, built by Hammurabi, was destroyed by the Assyrians. But between 600 B.C. and 500 B.C., the Chaldeans, who originated in the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf, swept aside the Assyrian power on their way north and took its place for over half a century. Nebuchadnezzar of the Old Testament was one of the rulers at this period and he it was that rebuilt the Babylon whose ruins may be seen to this day. It was during his reign that the power of Babylonia extended to the Mediterranean, and his capture of Jerusalem was followed by the leading of the Jews into captivity, the Jews whose miseries are recorded in the pages of the Old Testament. It is certain that the Jewish colonies in Iraq to-day are very largely descended from these ancient captives.

But the time of native rule was drawing to an end, and in 539 B.C., the Persians under Cyrus moved westwards and destroyed the power of Babylonia. Persian influence remained paramount for two hundred years, the Persian armies crossing and recrossing the country, until Alexander the Great in his imperial conquests took Mesopotamia in his stride and brought the country under Greek influence. Alexander died at Babylon, where his war-hardened veterans filed past his deathbed so that he could give them his last benison. Greek influence continued in Seleucia—the city founded by one of Alexander's generals just south of Baghdad—but the Persians soon returned to the scene, the Parthians overthrowing Seleucia and establishing Ctesiphon, just across the river. Another wave of invasion from Persia followed, represented by the Sassanid dynasty, who about A.D. 200, brought Ctesiphon to its greatest magnificence, building the great tiled and jewelled arch, the ruins of which remain to this day. For nearly four centuries this state of magnificence continued: the country was prosperous, trade flourished, and the ancient canal systems were developed and extended.

Meantime in the south a new star had arisen. The Prophet Muhammad, born in A.D. 570, brought Islam into being as a great fighting religion and before a century had passed the Muslims had swept away the Sassanids. The whole of the Arabian peninsula

came under Muslim control and the Caliphs took the place of the ancient rulers. The Abbasid Caliphs removed the capital from Damascus to Baghdad, and the City of the Caliphs, as it came to be called, reached its zenith of power and splendour. In this golden age of Baghdad visitors came to the city from all parts of the world, students were attracted to the famous city of learning on the Tigris, which was in fact a great university while Europe was still plunged in barbarism. The famous stories of *The Thousand and One Nights* tell of Harun ar Rashid, the greatest of these Caliphs, and of the glories and magnificence of the city at that time. The rule of the Caliphs continued for several centuries, although as was inevitable, there came a decline from this high eminence.

In the heart of Asia there were during those centuries great stirrings of the Mongol and Tartar tribes and in the middle of the thirteenth century of the Christian era, a great invasion under Hulagu Khan swept through Mesopotamia and wiped out the Arab Caliphs. Baghdad was sacked and pillaged. The victors piled the skulls of the vanquished outside the gates of the city. The great irrigation systems were destroyed. The country became the abomination of desolation. This was in A.D. 1258. Not until our own time did Baghdad begin to recover.

On a fine May day in 1453 the Turks swept into Constantinople, and one hundred years later, while they were pushing westwards into Europe, they were at the same time thrusting south from Anatolia and in 1534 Iraq came under direct Ottoman rule. Corrupt and inefficient, hampered also by the poor communications and the long distances, the Turkish rule was shadowy except in the towns; indeed, all that Constantinople worried about was the exaction of tribute from all the provinces. Whole belts of the country became from time to time independent, as and when strong tribal leaders arose. Insecurity even in the towns became a by-word, life was so cheap that murders could be arranged for a few pence. There was no effective law except the law that might was right, and until the time of the Great War the country was terrorized by a succession of robber barons who lived on plundering and blackmail.

From 1914 onwards the history of Iraq is generally familiar to most people. The British troops landed at the mouth of the Shatt-al-Arab as soon as Turkey entered the war. Their object was to protect

British oil interests in South Persia. They soon found it necessary to push north—meeting with incidental reverses, including the surrender at Kut—and finally entered Baghdad in March 1917, driving the Turks almost completely out of the country by the time of the Armistice some eighteen months later. A period of indecision followed. Most of the British officials were under the very distinct impression that the country would remain a British colony or protectorate. A change of policy prevailed, however, and after the Euphrates rebellion in 1920 had been quelled, the British more and more definitely decided to withdraw as soon as the Mandate which she was exercising on behalf of the League of Nations should become capable of termination by reason of Iraq's growth to political and administrative stature.

As the years passed, the British control was withdrawn, the officials remaining only as British advisers to the Iraqi officials who took their places. This tendency still continued, in a manner steadily becoming more and more intensive until September 1932, when the Mandate was terminated. On October 3rd Iraq was admitted to membership of the League of Nations and thus became independent.



TYPICAL SUNNI ARAB IN WINTER KIT



A BAGHDAD COFFEE-SHOP

IRAQ

CHAPTER I

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

IRAQ, since time immemorial, has been one of the great highroads between East and West. Its people have watched for countless centuries the caravans faring forth from Baghdad to Aleppo and Damascus, to Mecca in the south and Samarkand in the north, to Persia, Afghanistan and India; they have watched the caravans returning. It has seen successive waves of conquest, with invaders and counter-invaders sweeping across from east to west and back again. It has its own dark history of crime, of ambition, of passionate love; through all the centuries the common people have carried on their commonplace existence and ensured the survival of civilization in the plain of the Two Rivers.

The Kingdom of Iraq lies between the southern frontier of Turkey and the head of the Persian Gulf. On the east it marches with Persia, and while its western boundary is coterminous with that of French-controlled Syria and British-controlled Transjordan, there is in fact no effective frontier in the inhospitable desert which stretches from the Euphrates into Syria. The total area of Iraq is 453,500 square kilometres and the country maintains a population of about 3,000,000. Physically the country may be divided into three parts: Firstly, there is the great plain of the two rivers; secondly, the uplands and foothills which begin to rise from the plain about two hundred miles north of Baghdad; thirdly, the highlands of the north and north-east.

The plain through which the two great rivers Tigris and Euphrates run for the greater part of their course, is the largest of these three divisions; it consists entirely of alluvial sediment brought down by the rivers. The northern edge of this great deposit may be roughly traced by a line on the map between Ramadi in the west and Khanaqin in the east. No stone exists in this plain. It is in fact the delta of the two rivers, which for miles in their

course are higher than the surrounding country, which must be protected against floods by bunding. The foothills occupy the area lying between Khanaqin and Mosul and Khanaqin and Ramadi. The land surface here consists of rolling uplands of uncultivable gypsum desert in the northerly portion. Whereas the riverain plain does not exceed 150 ft. above sea-level at its highest, the uplands average about 1,000 ft. More fortunate than the plainsmen, the inhabitants here can engage in cultivation, with the result that the country to Western eyes looks more familiar and is indeed in places very beautiful. North of the uplands comes the highland region. The mountain ranges here exceed 10,000 feet and some of them reach as much as 15,000 feet. The climate here is the ordinary highland climate, a cold winter with heavy rains and snow, and a hot summer. There are many fine streams and the cultivation is varied.

Of the 3,000,000 population two-thirds are Muslim Arabs. The 90,000 Christians live largely in the north of the country, and Muslim Kurds to the number of about 500,000 inhabit the mountains in the north-east. One or two minor sects will be noted later. The people of Baghdad are predominantly Arab, but there are many wealthy Jews and Christians, mostly engaged in business. So too in Basrah. The Jews in the country total some 100,000.

Life in the desert is hard. Man depends upon water for his existence and upon the camel for his ability to reach it. The Baduin regulate their lives by the rains and the floods. In the deserts and plains the rainfall does not exceed six inches in the year and the rainfall is confined to the months of November, December, January and February. In the highlands of the north, stretching into Anatolia, the rainfall swells the rivers, which rise still higher after the melting of the mountain snows in early spring, with the result that the Tigris and the Euphrates come down in heavy flood. At Baghdad the Tigris rises by from 20 to 23 feet; the Euphrates, which comes down a little later, rises about 15 feet. The flooding in the past has not been scientifically controlled,[1] but the overflowing streams, ensuring a rich but transient vegetation, have had a vital influence on the politics and history of the country.

The deserts, the rivers, the hills all have their own peculiar people and problems.

[1] See chapter on Irrigation.

The deserts of Iraq stretch north-west, west, south-west, south, and east from the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates. To reach Aleppo, Damascus and Jerusalem the great Syrian desert must be crossed. Nowadays this is an easy journey and regular motor services are maintained. No adventures need be expected, apart from punctures or, in the wet season, being bogged. Great stretches of the desert are simply rolling downs of gypsum or gravel. Here cars can attain great speeds, the only danger being the occasional hidden hole or depression. But there are also enormous areas of alluvial soil which rain quickly turns into glutinous mud, and there are numerous patches of deep, soft sand into which cars run at their peril. The Syrian desert is crossed normally in about twenty-four hours. Halfway, at Rutbah Wells, the only water-hole on the route, there is a comfortable rest-house, or hotel, at which clean beds and excellent meals can be obtained. It lies two hundred miles from any other water and is one of the wonders of this part of the world.

The journey in the hot weather can be stifling; in the cold weather it is bitterly cold. The Syrian desert rises to 2,000 feet above sea-level and the usual desert climate prevails—great heat in the summer and intense cold in the winter. The traveller will see from time to time Baduin tribes on the move, or in their encampments. These are collections of black hair tents identical with those of Abraham and other patriarchs of the Old Testament. Camels, asses, sheep and goats are the wealth of these wandering communities, apart from gold and silver, or the individual jewellery and adornments worn by the women or stowed away in the Shaikhs' treasure-chests.

Their life is hard. As season succeeds season they migrate, with all that they possess. In the summer, when the sun burns up everything, they move either to the rivers or to the permanent water-holes. So great is the congregation of tribespeople at such places that great political and diplomatic skill is frequently called for in order to maintain the peace. In the winter, when the rains bring out all the vegetation of the desert, the tribes move out farther afield. It is in this season that raiding normally takes place, for with the extended grazing provided by the rain, greater mobility is possible and the camel-riders, two to a camel on a raid, can make long journeys with ease and security. But raiding is dying out, partly

owing to greater Government control in the desert, partly because modern weapons make it really too dangerous a sport. In the old days there were few casualties, but now with machine-guns on armoured cars, as some of the big shaikhs have, there would be many.

The desert is instinct with politics. Each tribe has its own place in the scheme of things and its own circuit of movement from grazing-ground to grazing-ground. Although the desert seems to be trackless, yet there are ancient well-defined tracks from town to town, from village to village, and from water to water. Urgent news is brought by quick camel-riders; the general gossip of Arabia is carried from bazaar to bazaar by pilgrims, wandering men, traders, and by the Solubba, a curious tribe of tinkers and hunters who move freely through the tribes.[1] News travels fast in the desert and the shaikhs are invariably well informed about the balance of power in Arabia, whose stars are waning and whose in the ascendant. Their "desert news service" is also most complete on the mercantile side —the prices of live stock, gold and motor-cars. The coffee-shops in the small desert towns are a veritable whispering gallery in which no secret of Arabia is long respected.[2]

The law of the desert is simple, indeed primitive. The scriptural "eye for an eye" is still the rule. The blood-feud persists and one murder must be expiated by another, committed by a near relative of the first victim on some member of the aggressor tribe. True, the principle of blood-money is also applied, and frequently the giving of a woman in marriage from the one tribe to the other may settle the dispute. But in principle the ancient law holds. It is administered by the shaikhs in tribunal and is as rigid in its application as any modern code. The shaikhs are chosen for their capacity, a son not necessarily succeeding his father. The Arabs have a very

[1] The Solubba are popularly supposed to be Muslimized descendants of the Crusaders (their name is derived from the Arabic word for "Cross"). Other theories give them a gipsy origin. They are beneath the notice of the true Badu, who despises them so much that they do not come within the scope of the blood-feud. This explains the security with which they move about in the peninsula. They possess much live stock, particularly a breed of large white asses.

[2] It is not so long since the first indication of an impending raid was given to the British intelligence service by the sudden frenzied buying of camel-saddles in a town five hundred miles away.

strong sense, not of democracy it is true, but of personal equality. The humblest man in the tribe has free access to the shaikh's council tent; Lawrence records that the "manner of the British officers toward their men struck horror into my bodyguard." The Arab in this way has more independence than, say, the Hindu, an indirect product perhaps of his faith.

The way of life among the Arabs is patriarchal, the honour of the women being jealously guarded. A woman's lapse from virtue means death at the hands of her father or brother. If she is a wife her husband hands her back to her family, who do the rest. This rule is almost universal. In the towns the more civilized codes of law are taking its place, but in the desert there is no truckling to new-fangled justice—the woman caught in adultery, or circumstantially guilty of it, is killed.[1] The women are seldom educated, even in reading and writing. They marry early—all that is asked of them is the ability to produce sons, and to milk, bake, make butter and cheese, and weave mats and clothing. The meals prepared by the women are frugal—rice, unleavened bread, eggs, chicken, hare, gazelle or bustard when game can be caught, lizards and jerboas (in the case of the more despised tribes). On greater occasions a sheep is slaughtered and roasted whole in an earthen oven. It is brought in on a flat tray, surrounded by high piles of rice and by smaller trays with chickens and other delicacies. Honoured guests are helped by the host who tears off with his fingers tasty morsels for them. Others may help themselves and when all have eaten till they can eat no more, they give up their places to the next in importance, going out to where the slaves or serving-men are waiting with spouted jugs to pour water upon the greasy hands of the feasters. At no time is there any privacy for anyone. Everything is common knowledge; the desert Arab, like the child, is not so much inquisitive as interested in the affairs of others. This is a characteristic of the urban Arab too; sometimes he carries it too far, and his Jewish and Christian neighbours vie with him in this respect. The native clerks in banks and other business firms think nothing of disclosing in the bazaar their customers' business affairs. In the case of the banks indeed many clerks are in the pay of various brokers and others who for different reasons may wish to know

[1] See Chapter XII.

the private affairs of some of the banks' customers. But in large part the desire to find out about one's neighbour is not so much dishonest as just naïve.

Murders in blood-feud or in revenge for honour besmirched, are counted for merit. Thieving is rampant, for the desert Badu, like the soldier, will pick up anything that may help him in his hard life. The Badu, too, is venal to a degree and a relatively small price will buy him. He is often treacherous, judged by Western standards,[1] and while he has plenty of *élan*, he lacks the power of sticking to a job or holding to some unpleasant task. He is apt to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. He is hospitable in the extreme, but in the case of strangers his laws of hospitality demand only hospitality for a few days, after which the stranger, unless asked to remain, must take his departure and the risk of his erstwhile hosts becoming his enemies. The Badu has an acute sense of his rights; his sense of his duties and responsibilities is not so acute. His sense of honour is keen, and so is his pride.

The Badu too, is lazy. As soon as he can settle by fresh water he simply sits down and sleeps or waits for food to be brought to him by the women. The desert life is so hard that this is no doubt a natural reaction. The Badu's only enjoyments are physical. He has evolved no art-forms; his music is primitive in the extreme, his literature (apart from the Koran) is the narration of simple stories and ballads, more often than not bawdy, around the camp-fires or in the tents. His sexual life is completely devoid of civilized inhibitions. He will have two or three wives, and, if a man of wealth, even more—not simultaneously, for divorce of the earlier and older ones is a matter of no difficulty. The Koran lays down precepts as to when marital intercourse is not permitted, but apart from such occasions the Badu regards the sexual act just like any other of the physical functions. He sees nothing romantic in it; it is to him neither ennobling nor degrading, but just impersonal. Sons are desired; if daughters come instead, then shame is on the mothers.

The young boy grows up in surroundings which to the Western eye seem unhealthy. If he is of wealthy family he is surrounded

[1] In her famous memorandum of February 1919, Miss Gertrude Bell quoted the then Naqib of Baghdad as saying "It is the nature of every Arab to confide to the authorities the doings of all other Arabs."

in childhood by female retainers, all anxious for favours to come. Most boys in wealthy families are thus early initiated into habits of vice, and they get further opportunities if they are wealthy enough, or near enough, to go into Damascus or Baghdad. The boy is normally married[1] by the time he is seventeen or nineteen, and it is often found that any smartness of brain which he showed as a youngster begins then to disappear. Until about forty he may be said to be in the prime of life, but he goes down the hill fairly quickly and most Baduin of fifty or fifty-five are old men. Aphrodisiacs enjoy a ready sale in the bazaars.

It is from this desert stock that the Arab of Iraq has sprung. Numerically the pure desert stock is relatively small and there is at work a constant tendency to settle which blunts the sharp line that otherwise could be drawn between the nomad and the townsman. The nomad's tent is first anchored down by sheltering piles of brushwood. Then it becomes a reed-hut and finally a mud-hut. The townsman likes to see the tribesmen settled, thus fixing him where he can be found, but the police say it makes for an increase of petty crime, especially in hard times. Economically the free nomad may become a settled serf, the shaikh a feudal overlord. In the towns the harder virtues of the desert become softened into luxury and easy living; on the other side, weaknesses that the desert does not allow to survive exist in degenerate form; overall, the facile "smartness" of the townsman replaces the steadier, starker virtues of the tribes, and education comes in to widen the rift still more, for few of the children of tribespeople or cultivators go to school.

There is no prostitution except in the towns. It is controlled by police regulation, based on the Muslim ideal of safeguarding the family and the position of women. All prostitutes are licensed and registered, and pay a tax; if any "unofficial" woman is found engaged in prostitution in a private house, she is at once put on the register and removed to the official brothel-area, where she comes under police discipline and is subject to weekly medical examination. Most of the licensed prostitutes in Iraq are Iraqi or Syrian Christians and a smaller number are Jewesses; there are also Muslim women, usually widows[2] or discarded wives, of the lower

[1] See Appendix C for marriage customs in Southern Iraq.

[2] It is a disgrace for a woman to outlive her husband.

classes. There is no solicitation in the streets; the unregistered women have pimps. Homosexuality is rife, both among the idle women of the harems and among men. Sodomy is a penal offence, but in practice it is almost impossible to get a conviction in the courts.

Middle-class functions in the towns of Iraq to-day are carried out mainly by the Jews and the Christians, although with the post-war spread of education an educated Muslim middle-class is rapidly arising. In pre-war days the Christian and Jewish communities maintained their own schools, but the Muslims, except for the sons of the aristocracy, remained in the mass illiterate.[1] There is thus a great gap between the aristocracy and the labouring classes, with nothing to fill it except a few officials and lawyers, the older of them Turkish-trained. The townsman and the tribesman for centuries have hated each other; one of the most complex problems that Iraq has to face lies in the distrust between the towns and the tribes.

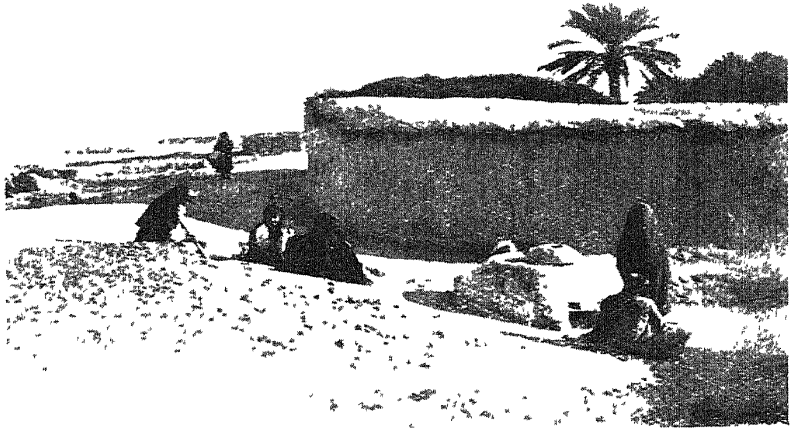
The Arab by temperament cannot build up a business over a long period. He always wants quick results. This is largely because there was no real security in Turkish days. But apart from that, the Oriental does prefer ups and downs (being an optimist he expects more ups!) to a steady but to him dull progress.

The family maintains its ancient tyranny over the individual. It is more than the family interest which is the dominating power even in the so-called individualist West. It is natural that man should strive for the interests of his family, but this healthy tendency is in Iraq carried to extremes which tend to militate against the efficient running of the state and of commerce, particularly the former. Government service is the goal of education in Iraq. The young effendi as a rule has his eye upon the civil service. This is all to the good, but the civil service so far has no corporate tradition and it is in this field that the tyranny of the family must be broken. It is probably natural that his father or mother or elder brother should be unwilling that some individual clerk should take up a new post in another town. But it is essential that such influences should not be allowed to interfere with movements in the civil service. This tyranny of the family is at work from the

[1] In the religious schools the *Mullahs* teach only reciting the Koran; some of them cannot even read.



CARRYING HOME FIREWOOD



OUTSIDE A FELLAHEEN VILLAGE; COMMUNAL BAKING OVEN IN FOREGROUND

boy's birth until his death. At every crisis in his career, whatever the interests of his own future may dictate, the views of his family are his first consideration.

There are reasons for this. Until the past decade, communications were so bad and the country so insecure that to send a youth to the other end of the country made him almost as inaccessible as if he had gone to Europe or America. Moreover, the corrupt exactions of Turkish officials and the blackmail of the robber barons who studded the countryside tended to keep families together as a means of self-defence. A newly married couple in the old days never set up a house of their own. This centripetal tendency within the family is thus a force to be reckoned with. There are, however, signs that it is being gradually undermined and no doubt big changes will be seen when the older generation has passed away. Many young Arabs would like to see their wives going about in Baghdad unveiled, as they would in Syria or Turkey or Europe, but they dare not face the disapproval of their families. In practice, a Baghdad woman or girl[1] may be, and usually is, unveiled when travelling abroad, but as soon as she returns to Baghdad, on goes the veil again, except at parties and the like at which no Muslim men are present. But times are changing rapidly and by the time the next generation comes along, the family will begin to be relegated to the background.

The social system is feudal. An aristocratic family has whole families of retainers, virtually domestic slaves, who have grown up with the family and whose children will follow them. In the case of cultivators, the retainers are entitled by law to a certain share in the fruits of their toil, so that while socially the structure is feudal, economically it represents a form of profit-sharing. But this is established by custom and not by law; and as yet there is little sign of a fixed wage in farming. But the past decade has seen rapid changes and a new society is arising in the towns.

Along the rivers are the great cultivating landlords and their *fellahin*. On the Tigris and the Euphrates their principal crops are cereals. On the Shatt-al-Arab, centred on Basrah, are the great date-gardens, the export of fruit from which is an important source

[1] Baduin women and unmarried girls enjoy much greater freedom than townswomen.

of revenue. Social conditions among the cultivators, as might be expected, are advanced or retarded according to their distance from the nearest substantial town. The *fellahin* are as a class probably the most numerous in the country. Their condition has remained unchanged for centuries, although the easier communications and the increased security during the past ten or fifteen years have introduced an important modifying influence. If this has meant nothing else, it has meant that the strength of the government can be surely and swiftly brought to bear where and when required. In pre-war days there were great stretches of country, notably the Muntafiq (from the Euphrates to the Tigris, between Kut and Nasiriyah), where the Turkish writ did not run, where no official dared show his face, and where no taxes were paid. To-day this is no longer the case. The powers and influence of the shaikhs have tended to decrease with the growth in strength of the central control. As the Government has grown stronger, the individual *fellah* sees less and less necessity for tribal unity and so is less and less ready to stand tyranny on the part of his shaikh, which to his forefathers was tolerable because protection went with it. The Government is not yet strong enough to carry on without the shaikhs, although this is its aim. The gap between townsman and tribesman is thus in Iraq much wider than it is, for instance, in Egypt, even though it has been narrowed by easy and safe communications.

The cultivators, whether recently settled or the descendants of former generations of settlers, live frugally, but they are improvident and lazy. The date-packers for instance make enough in the two or three months of the season to keep them in idleness for the rest of the year, and they are typical. Their needs are few, and when the worst comes to the worst the odd job will always produce the few pence necessary for the next day or two. Their religion teaches them that Allah will provide; this kills all will even to live. A family of *fellahin* can exist on about a penny a day per head. They will have a meat meal not more than once a week, if that. Rice, flat-bread, dates and an egg or so are all they ask. The more necessary luxuries, such as tea, sugar, cigarettes, must of course be bought in addition; one reason why the *fellahin* suffered from the slump in grain prices during the past few years was that they had grown so accustomed to these that the luxuries had become costly neces-

saries. Large numbers of the *fellahin* are in debt, consisting largely of pay drawn in advance.

In the south of Iraq there are great stretches of marsh and shallow water, the Hammar Lakes, which extend from the Euphrates to the Tigris. Here exist, in the most primitive conditions, the so-called Marsh Arabs. For miles and miles huge reeds grow from the water and obscure the sky. It is the wildfowler's paradise. The Marsh Arabs, skilful watermen, have their own "paths" through these forests of reeds, pushing their sharp-prowed boats through on their journeyings to and from the various islands which stud the lakes and on which they have their homes. Their livelihood depends on their fishing and on their water-buffaloes and small live stock. They are of a low standard of intelligence.[1] They use a few words and sounds which are non-Arabic and they may indeed be a survival of the early peoples of the country; the boat which they normally use, the *mashhuf*, is identical with the models of four thousand years ago which have been unearthed in the tombs at Ur, only a few miles distant.

The Arab's religion is that of the Prophet Muhammad. He venerates Christ as a prophet and all the rest of the long list stretching back to the Old Testament times, but Muhammad was the last Prophet of God and there will never be another. Like all the fighting faiths, there is nothing of meekness or humility in Islam. There is but one God to the Muslim and He is all-pervading and omnipresent. There are, it is true, religious observances in the mosques, and there are certain big festivals in the Muslim calendar. But the Muslim carries his religion with him into his daily life. At prayer-times one can see praying men anywhere in the streets. All the vicissitudes of life are provided for in the Koran, which indeed is the *fons et origo* of Muhammadan jurisprudence. Free-thinking is beginning to show itself in the towns and particularly among those younger men who have been to Europe. But among the tribes the old faith exercises its sway to the point of fanaticism.[2]

Such then are the Arabs of the deserts and the alluvial delta.

[1] During the great four-yearly cholera epidemics in Southern Iraq the British medical officers have found that many of these marsh-people do not know even the names of their parents.

[2] For the Sunni-Shiah schism see chapter on the Holy Cities.

Going northwards and eastwards from Baghdad into the foothills, Turcoman and Kurdish physical types begin to make their appearance. They are more robust than the Arab; they are in fact mountaineers and not plainsmen. The Turcoman is no more than a central Asian type, the Kurd is a definite and clear-cut racial type. He is Aryan, while the Arab is Semitic. The Kurds are highlanders occupying the mountains in the north-east of Iraq and their homeland is cut by the political frontiers of Iraq, Persia and Turkey. They are a hardy, brave and cruel race, full of intelligence, and make first-class guerrilla fighters. They are said to be treacherous, but most of the British officers who have served with the Kurd are strongly predisposed in his favour. The Kurds provide most of the coolies in Baghdad and the big towns. They possess a strength and a stamina which the Arab of the same class, possibly through malnutrition,[1] does not possess and all the heavy carrying work is done by them. They are a musical race, with highland pipes like all mountaineers, and are excellent stage actors and mimics. They will be discussed more fully in the chapter on Minorities.

The mountains too have their nomads. These tribes, neither Arab nor Kurd nor Persian, move twice a year on their great migrations. They spend the winter in the plains of Iraq for the high Persian plateau is then snow-covered; the summer they spend on the plateau, for the Iraqi plains are then burned up. This involves a tremendous migration every six months. The whole tribe moves —men, women, children, babies, cattle, horses, asses, sheep, goats, dogs, and all their household impedimenta from the tents downwards. Everything has to be moved across rivers and rushing torrents. In the spring precipitous mountains over ten thousand feet high, must be climbed in order to reach the grazing on the plateau. In the autumn the descent has to be made to the plains. By the time a man is fifty he will have performed this great mountaineering ordeal a hundred times. It is an ordeal which eliminates all but the fittest; in addition to the actual trekking and climbing, the nomads must at all times be ready to defend themselves against marauders.

[1] When the Iraqi Government in 1931 forbade the practice of bringing Persian coolies to Basrah to unload and load ocean-going steamers, the Port Authorities had first to feed their new Arab coolies in order to bring them up to the required standard of strength and endurance.

The indigenous Christians in Iraq are relics of the old schismatic divisions of the Eastern communion. Most of the sects have archiepiscopal or episcopal sees, with prelates residing in Mosul. The chances of the war turned out unluckily for them. The Assyrians,[1] for instance, whose homeland was in the Hakkiari country, fought for the Russians against the Turks and now find themselves with neither home nor political independence. They are a fine fighting race. The men are clean, virile fellows and make excellent soldiers. Remnants of the Armenian race are dotted here and there in refugee camps where they have remained since the war. They do not count for much. Other Christian communities include Jacobites, Chaldeans and Syrian Catholics, as well as some Maronites. From the Chaldeans most of the hotel-keepers and waiters in the country are recruited.

One of the strangest religious sects, in this country of many sects, is the Devil-worshippers or the Yezidis. These Devil-worshippers number about thirty thousand. Most of them live in the Jebel Sinjar, on the frontier with Syria, but their chief shrines are at Shaikh Adi, a little to the north of Mosul. It would perhaps be more correct to call them Devil-Propitiators. They fear Satan rather than worship him, and prayers and offerings form their tribute. Satan is to them the greatest of the fallen angels, who after his repentance was given the earth to rule for ten thousand years. As this happened about six thousand years ago, he still has about four thousand to run. His name, Shaitan, is a veritable name of fear—so much so that the Devil-worshippers will use no word beginning with the sound *sh*. Even the very ordinary Arabic word *shatt*, meaning river, is tabu; their chiefs similarly, are never called shaikhs but are Amirs or Mirs. I remember one of them calling on me in Baghdad one day. In the approved style he sent up his card—a piece of tissue paper, like cigarette paper, with a crude rubber-stamp impression of the Sacred Peacock and below, in English from the left and Arabic from the right, his name followed by his title "Amir of the Yezidis." Ostensibly he came to pay his compliments to a representative of the generous and just British race; actually his object was to find out what could be done to help him to prosecute his claims to the principal chieftainship of his sect.

[1] See Minorities, p. 139.

For there are several claimants to this sacred—and lucrative—post. The Yezidis worship the Devil in the form of the Sacred Peacock, of which there are seven known bronze images. One is kept at the principal shrine at Shaikh Adi; the other six are peripatetic and the control of them is a valuable property. Less important objects of veneration are the white bull; the sun, moon and stars; and the black serpent. The white bull is sacrificed annually—a strange relic in our time of the Mithraic religion with which students of Roman history are familiar. The bull is sacrificed at a Sun Temple, north of Mosul, which is decorated with astronomical signs, and has outside the entrance a representation of the black serpent, which is associated with their faith. Jesus is venerated by them, but he comes far behind Satan. The Peacock, i.e. Melek Taos, represents the principal object of their faith, and Melek Isa (Jesus) is a poor second. They believe in both the Christian Testaments and also the Muslim Koran. Satan to them stands not so much for Evil, as for Power, which explains the fact that their religion stands for propitiation rather than worship. One of their religious tenets is a rigid refusal to accept education, even the barest rudiments of the three R's. For this reason alone they must have a dwindling place in a state that is rapidly being modernized. To this must be added the fact that they are shrinking in numbers, in spite of the protection afforded by their isolated position.

Another sect in Iraq that is dwindling are the Mandaeans or Sabaeans. They number less than five thousand, and one of the reasons for their steady diminution is that when one of their women marries a Muslim or a Christian she leaves her religion as well as her community. These marriages are fairly frequent, for the Mandaean women are unveiled and are normally good-looking. The visitor to southern Iraq is familiar with the Mandaeans—they are the silversmiths, known as Amarah-workers, who work in the bazaars making trinkets of silver with designs inlaid in antimony. The origin of these people is unknown. One legend makes them the descendants of the Queen of Sheba's subjects; another makes them a pre-Christian sect of worshippers of John the Baptist. Neither of these beliefs has scientific basis. What is certain is that ablution is a vital feature of their religious belief—not baptism in the sense in which we regard it, but immersion in the element which gives life.

For this reason their little communities are to be found along rivers, as immersion must follow all the pollutions of daily life, as well as major breaches of conduct, even formal breaches that may be committed in ignorance by their priests or leaders. They sleep lying north-and-south, and the dead are buried facing the north. The holiest among them are vegetarians. All are pacifists. All hold that a devout acceptance of their creed will avert disease or illness. They have no political ambitions and are a minority that sets no problems for the Arab Government.

The Jews are the one considerable section of the Iraqi nation not yet described. It is tolerably certain that they are the descendants of the Jews taken captive at Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and brought to Babylon as slaves for clearing the canals of the silt which the floods brought down every year.[1] Like their co-religionists everywhere they have maintained their purity of race and the wealthy families have conserved their inheritances by inter-marriage. They have made themselves an integral part of the nation. Both in business and in politics they have played a big part. Anti-Zionist feeling is strong among the Muslims of Iraq. The first Lord Melchett, then still Sir Alfred Mond, was the centre of a riot in February 1928 when he visited Baghdad. He had been studying Zionist progress in Palestine, and his object in visiting Iraq was concerned with the chemical side of agriculture in which he was interested. The Jewish community in Baghdad decided to do honour to such a famous co-religionist, and at once rumours were started that Lord Melchett had come to Zionize Iraq. On arrival he was greeted by hostile demonstrations and the riots called for special government measures for the maintenance of order. These were dropped later. In August 1929, when the Wailing Wall disturbances broke out in Jerusalem, mass meetings were held in Baghdad protesting against the British policy in Palestine and also against the progress of Zionism. Special editions of the Arab newspapers were published, telegrams of condolence and protest hummed across the wires. But the Jews in Iraq were not molested.

In former times all men wore the flowing robe or *abba*, covering a garment like a nightgown, called a *dishdasha*. The Arabs wore headcloth and headrope, the Jews and Christians the *tarboosh* or

[1] "By the waters of Babylon we sat and wept."

leaves a permanent unsightly scar. The house-fly in its various subspecies is to be found everywhere, and, thanks to the primitive sanitation and hygiene among the masses, is the cause of much of the dysentery and of the eye and skin diseases which are rife.

Dust storms are frequent in the hot weather, especially if the previous winter has had little rain. The least breath of wind sets the desert sand in motion. What on water is a cat's-paw sets the tiniest particles scurrying over the surface of the ground until some obstacle checks them. On the middle Euphrates the desert is thus in continuous movement. When the wind rises, it carries the sand particles into the air in clouds. A heavy dust-storm is like a London fog and hangs overhead like a pall. The fine particles penetrate everywhere. The closest-fitting windows and doors cannot keep out the dust. These dust-storms when continuous are most trying. In the southerly parts of the country the dust usually comes with a north or west wind. The south wind, blowing up from the Persian Gulf, brings humidity to the atmosphere and lassitude to the people. The air seems to hang, sodden, over everything; there is no movement of any kind and one simply sits and sweats. In this kind of weather a man will leave his bath, dry himself, and in a trice is as wet with perspiration as when in the bath. "It was a toil to be," says Coleridge, and that is the southern Iraq late summer climate in a nutshell.

No one, unless compelled to, goes out in the sun. The Arab's clothes are excellent hot-weather clothes. The head-cloth protects the head and nape of the neck; the cloak is frequently rolled up and carried on the head, with part falling over the neck, thus giving additional protection. When the sand is blowing, and the sun is thus obscured, the Arab winds the free ends of his head-cloth over his nose and mouth, and brings the upper flap on the forehead down over the eyes, which thus look out through a narrow slit like a visor.

The houses are built for the summer. They have thick walls—in the north built of stone, in the south, where there is no stone, of mud or dried brick. Most houses are of only two storeys above ground, owing to the difficulty of finding a foundation for heavier weight. Nearly every house has a vaulted underground or semi-underground room or rooms in which the family eat and sleep during the hot afternoon. The prevailing insecurity in former times,

coupled with the Muslim seclusion of women, determined the architectural style. Each house is built round a central courtyard.[1] As a rule every window in the house is barred and there are generally few windows below the first storey. The walls are high and the single door is of heavy wood, usually teak, studded with iron knobs and having a formidable lock. Most doors have a peep-hole, for the better examination of the stranger who knocks. During the last few years houses of the open villa type have been constructed in the suburbs of Baghdad and other towns. They have barred windows and sturdy doors but do not present the same "fortress" appearance as the houses of the traditional style.

In the old days of insecurity in the Middle East every man carried his shot-gun. The rifle took the place of the shot-gun, and to-day, even where there is comparative security, the rifles still remain. There is a system of licences to carry arms, under which all arms in the country are registered, but it cannot be pretended that the register is in any sense complete. The official figures show a steady annual increase, but this does not mean that every year there are more firearms in the country; it merely means that more of the existing firearms are being registered, perhaps through police discovery or because informers have given the owners away. The object of the Arms Regulations is officially declared to be "to make the possession of arms an expensive luxury and so discourage the practice of carrying them." In effect it is merely a revenue tax which is grossly unequal in its incidence and cannot in practice be effectively collected. It has done practically nothing to disarm the population. The population, it may be said, refuse to disarm; indeed since British control of the police ended, the price of rifles in the bazaars has gone up, showing that the demand for them has increased.

The capital of Iraq is Baghdad, a city of some 300,000 inhabitants on the Tigris. Baghdad is an interesting, fascinating, but squalid city. The old town, on the left bank, is a maze of narrow alley-ways; the new town is partly a similar maze, but a fine new town-planned area is being built. The extensions, north and south, of the old town on the left bank, are also more or less town-planned. During the

[1] At Ur the excavations have proved that the houses of four thousand years ago were of the same architectural type as the Arab houses of to-day.

past half-dozen years there has been much building, due as much to the world "flight from money" since the exchanges lost their stability, as to any confidence that the present degree of security in the country will be maintained.

Baghdad is a great trading centre. Both native and European firms, mainly British, carry on business as importers and exporters; new businesses, European in origin and meeting European needs, have been developed since the war. These will be dealt with fully in the chapter on Trade and Industry, but here may be noted one industry that has had a marked social influence. The Baghdad Races have been one of the most flourishing institutions in the country. Strictly under British control, with a Turf Club whose rules and standards are as rigid as those of the Jockey Club, the races are now chiefly supported by the Arabs. The extreme Nationalists, on the specious plea that racing has a bad influence in that it encourages betting, but in reality trying to aim a blow at the foreigner, have tried to stop the racing, but its popular backing is such that this will prove difficult. Moreover, the export of pedigree Arab horses to India is a lucrative business, and organized racing in Iraq has undoubtedly helped to maintain the pure-bred standard. The race meetings take place on Saturdays and Sundays during the cold weather, and the members' enclosure is a popular rendezvous, particularly in March and April, when the social season is at its height and the big races are run. The Horse Show also takes place at this time and is extremely popular. The riding by the Arab cavalrymen and policemen is amazingly good and the Arab horses, although small judged by thoroughbred standards, put up a good display of pluck and speed.

The weather during these two months is beautiful, although by the end of April it may be beginning to get a little warm for those normally accustomed to northern climates. At the same time it is possible to walk about the town in comfort, visiting the bazaars and other places of interest. The bazaars are not so extensive as those, say, of Cairo, but at the same time are more unspoiled and the native brass and copperware, silks, carpets and the like, are cheaper. The main bazaar runs from Exchange Square in the direction of the Tigris; immediately opposite, on the other side of the street, away from the river, is the fruit and grain market, which is still

worth a visit. The bazaars with their constantly changing kaleidoscope offer countless opportunities for artistic photography.

The evening entertainments in Baghdad are not very varied. The cinemas are popular; the usual Hollywood and Elstree pictures are shown, with occasional Arab films from Egypt. Cabarets of the European type were suppressed in 1933. The reason given was that the artists—European or Levantine girls such as one sees in all the cabarets in the Near East—"take money out of the country." The real reason was a strange mixture. There was Arab puritanism in it as well as anti-foreign sentiment. The artists were foreigners and most of the people who visited the cabarets, and certainly all who spent big money there, were Europeans. There was the further coincidence that the cabaret-proprietors were invariably Christians, and the Christians in Iraq will invariably tell you that no Arab likes to stand by and watch a non-Arab making money. The closing of the cabarets meant considerable financial loss to the community. Whatever money the artists may have taken out of the country, this was certainly only a portion of what was spent and thus circulated through the town. The Iraqi in general has not grasped the principle that money is useless unless it is in circulation. The closing of the cabarets caused—as also would the stopping of the races—big losses to wholesale and retail business people, shippers, the national revenue, taxi-drivers (and through them car-dealers and the oil distributors), and the host of waiters and menials, whose wages were suddenly cut off.

Not all the evening entertainments, however, were stopped. The Arab theatres were allowed to continue. These are maintained by Muslim proprietors and are frequently run in connection with hotels and the larger coffee-houses. These entertainments are provided by Arabic women singers and dancers, whose performances are exotic and strange to Western ears and eyes. The music[1] is shrill and quavering and the instruments normally used are the zither, fiddles of various sorts, and drums of different varieties, shapes and tones. The drums are usually waisted cylinders. They are tucked

[1] While on the subject of music it may be stated that the Arab is given to singing songs, often love songs, as he walks along. He sings in a high falsetto, with many quarter-tones and grace-notes. It is interesting, too, to realize that the Arab does not whistle.

under one arm and the performer beats a tattoo with his fingers on the parchment which covers the top. The drummers, who begin as small boys, acquire great dexterity and their performances as a rule are no less interesting than the somewhat monotonous singing and swaying of the women dancers. They pound or thump their drums with their muscular fingers, bringing all kinds of varieties and changes of rhythm into their music and frequently working themselves up into a state of considerable exaltation. The dancing is static rather than dynamic. It is mostly symbolic and an expert dancer by her sinuous movements and gestures can move a whole audience to a state of great excitement. The public audiences are normally entirely composed of men.

Outside Baghdad the principal towns are Basrah, Mosul, Kirkuk, Amarah, Kut, Nasiriyah, Hillah and Sulaimani.

Basrah, the port of Iraq, is decaying but attractive. It is a straggling place consisting of three townships—Ashar, Basrah City and Margil. Ashar is the business centre, on the Shatt-al-Arab. Here are the banks and the chief business houses. Here too is the headquarters of the provincial government. Basrah City is declining in importance and many of its bazaars are closed. Both these are old towns with narrow streets and overhanging houses. Margil, where the port headquarters and the railway terminus are,[1] is a new town, of up-to-date bungalows laid out in a garden-city. The European community in Basrah live (with few exceptions) in Ashar or Margil. In the summer the climate is hot and humid, but the numberless creeks afford ample scope for picnics and outings. The small passenger craft of Basrah is the elegant and picturesque *bellum*—a gaily-painted gondola-like canoe, paddled or poled by two boatmen. Basrah's *bellums* are a most distinctive feature of the river scene. It was from Basrah that Sindbad the Sailor set out on his voyages. In the middle ages the city was a notable seat of learning. Its period of bursting prosperity came with the Great War, when it became the British base and its inhabitants simply coined money. Those days have gone, and Basrah's prosperity is once again entirely dependent upon the date-growing for which it has been famous for centuries.

Mosul, a fine open town, is the most important town in the

[1] See chapter on Railways, Roads and Rivers.

north. The population here is mixed—Arab, Kurd, Turcoman and Christian—the architecture different from any that the southern part of the country can show. Its streets are also wider and opener. Mosul is a busy centre. It is the central emporium for the northern highland region, and though the railway does not reach it, it is on the through railway route from Baghdad to Europe. All kinds of Christian sects deriving from the various Eastern churches have archbishops or bishops in Mosul, and just to the north-east of the town is the central shrine of the Yezidis, or Devil-worshippers. Across the river from Mosul is the site of ancient Nineveh, the whole of the countryside being associated with the name of the Prophet Jonah. Arbil[1] is a town of lesser importance lying to the north-east.

To the south of Mosul lie the oilfields. West of the Tigris is the new and undeveloped concession of the British Oil Development Company. The lands to the east of the river are reserved for the Iraq Petroleum Company, whose producing field is at Baba Gurgur, a few miles north of Kirkuk. Here about forty wells are ready for production and here is the landward end of the great pipe-line to the Mediterranean. The country is, as it were, saturated with oil. Near Baba Gurgur is still to be seen the "burning, fiery furnace" of the Old Testament, where Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego walked unscathed because the Lord was with them. The "burning, fiery furnace" is a little hollow in the arid foothills from which natural gas escapes to the surface in blue, lambent flames. The fire is perpetual and some have thought that the fire-worship which spread over Persia may have originated in this neighbourhood. Kirkuk is a mixed town. The older part is perched on a bluff, with narrow streets and alley-ways. The newer portion is partly squalid and tortuous, partly town-planned, with wide streets and gardens. It is a thriving place, thanks to the pipe-line activities.

Amarah and Kut, both on the Tigris, are important agricultural centres. They came into prominence in the world war but have since relapsed into their earlier obscurity. Nasiriyah, on the Euphrates, is a comparatively modern town, with well-laid out streets and bazaars. Hillah, also on the Euphrates, is the centre of an important agricultural region. Sulaimani, in eastern Kurdistan, was formerly

See p. 230.

a storm-focus. Latterly, however, with the development of roads and motor transport it has been more settled. It is a marketing centre for this part of Kurdistan, and also has trade relations with Persia. South of Basrah is the quaint desert town of Zubair, a Sunni stronghold in a country of Shiahs. It is a Holy City of the Sunnis and is a great centre for desert news and trade. Owing to the difference in the Customs duties imposed respectively by Kuwait and by Iraq, Zubair's chief industry at present is smuggling. In the west of the country lies Ramadi, the principal passport office for the desert-routes; in the east the frontier station into Persia is Khanaqin, in the producing field of the Rafidain Oil Company; an off-shoot of the Anglo-Persian.

Such in brief is the country of Iraq, such the people who live in this new state. It was King Faisal's hope and avowed object to unify the different religions and sects so that they should all become *Iraqis*, all subjects in the same state, and not Arab or Jew, Christian or Kurd. To this end he devised the national hat known as the *sidara*, very like the old British Royal Flying Corps cap. But whereas Riza Shah in Persia, and the Ghazi in Turkey, could at a stroke put all Persians, and all Turks, into uniform headgear, no such uniformity of mind existed in Iraq and there was no possibility of compelling the independent-minded desert Arabs, or the cultivators, or the Kurds, into wearing any hat they did not like. Many of them, too, cannot even grasp the idea of uniformity. The *sidara* has therefore come to be the mark of the townsman. Officials are compelled to wear it, and the younger generation in the towns have generally adopted it. It is this question of unity of sentiment among the Iraqis that is to-day so difficult. In the East men are prone to conceal their thoughts, but to anyone who has lived in Iraq, it is clear that for many years to come there will be diversity of interest and of sentiment as between the different sections within the state.

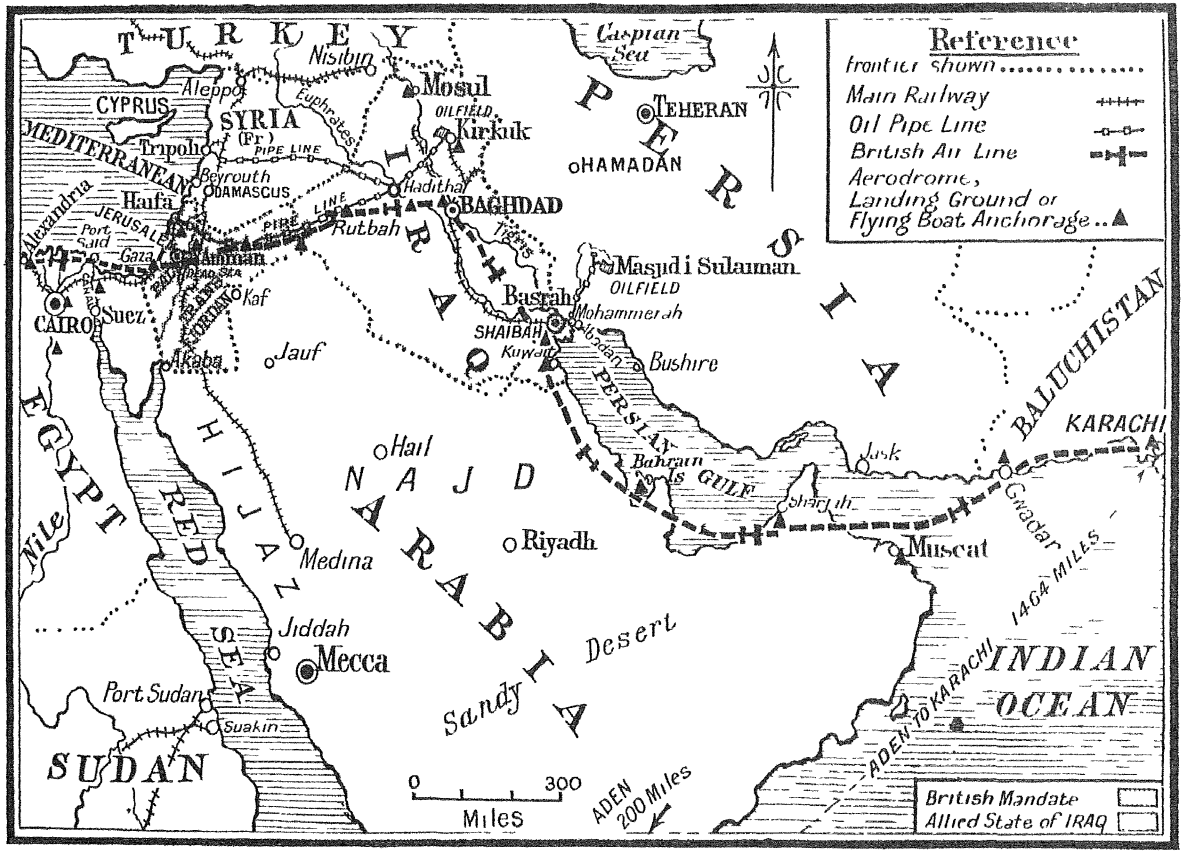
CHAPTER II

BRITISH IMPERIAL COMMUNICATIONS

BAGHDAD has come back to its old importance as the junction of the great roads to the East. Indeed, Britain's interest in Iraq is largely, almost entirely, dictated by the necessity of keeping her Indian communications open. Now that flying has become a normal means of communication, and even of troop movements, now that motor transport has brought the journey across the Syrian Desert within a day's compass, the Suez route has lost a certain amount of its value to Britain. At the same time, and by the same token, the old land routes between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf via Baghdad are recovering their ancient importance which they enjoyed before the opening up of the Cape route to India.

Until the British troops in the war captured Palestine and Mesopotamia, the whole of the area from the Levant to the Persian frontier and from the highlands of Anatolia to the Arabian Sea was Turkish. It is true that the coasts of the Arabian Peninsula were under other influences, chiefly British, and it is also true that Arab Nationalist movements had been making some headway. But in general the Middle East, as far as the Persian Gulf, was "Turkey in Asia." All that the Ottoman wanted was his quota of troops and his taxes on produce and on foreign trade. These assured, the Government in Constantinople had little further interest in the more distant and backward parts of its Asiatic dominions. Its *valis* or governors had one and one only further interest—namely, to increase their personal fortunes at the expense of the inhabitants.

The future of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine (with Transjordan) was decided at Paris. Woodrow Wilson insisted on their ultimate freedom, and invented the Mandate as a device to ensure their tutelage in statecraft until they were ready for liberty. In Syria, French influence, a relic from the times of the Crusades, was dominant, although there it was British troops accompanied by Lawrence's Arabs that won through to Damascus in October 1918. In Palestine there were numerous foreign interests, mainly of religious origin. British interest in the Holy Land had steadily



BRITISH IMPERIAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST



grown during the war, due to the vital necessity of keeping open the road to the East by the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. In Mesopotamia British influence was strong in Baghdad and in Basrah, which dominated the head of the Persian Gulf and therefore covered the British-controlled Anglo-Persian oilfields, and safeguarded, through the century-old operations of the British Navy in the Gulf, the flanks of the sea route to India.

As will be shown more fully later the idea of the Mandate did not appeal to the European Powers concerned in the idealistic way in which Wilson regarded it; "protectorate" was a more familiar idea in the Old World. But the settlement finally provided for "Mandates"—to be exercised in Syria and the Lebanon by France, and in Palestine (with Transjordan) and in Mesopotamia, soon to be called Iraq, by Britain. The principle, as laid down by Wilson, provided for the exercise of a Mandate—under the League of Nations, which set up for the purpose a Permanent Mandates Commission—by the Power which by reason of its experience and its geographical interests was best able to exercise it. Thus Wilson's ideals and Anglo-French *Realpolitik* were made to coincide; thus Britain in 1920 took over the control of the two springers of the great arch leading to India.

In the case of Palestine and Transjordan, the political situation remains essentially unchanged. There is constant friction, to a greater or less degree, between Jew and Arab. Each of the two sides maintains a press which is frankly propagandist; Britain is an effective control as between the two. Year by year the British High Commissioner, or his counsellor, visits Geneva to sponsor the annual reports which the British Colonial Office presents to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League, and on which the British representatives may be examined and cross-examined by the members of the Commission, many of whom on behalf of their Governments have axes to grind. Meanwhile Palestine remains prosperous, one of the few bright spots in a world of depression. Such progress as she is making is due almost entirely to the Western methods introduced by the Zionists; before many years have passed the harbour developments at Haifa and the establishment of oil-refineries there will mean the growth of a purchasing power, at present non-existent, similar to that which

has populated with steady-going artizans the Anglo-Persian oil area in South-West Persia.

In the case of Iraq the Mandate ended in October 1932, when Iraq became independent and entered the League of Nations as a constituent member, in full and friendly alliance with Great Britain by virtue of a treaty,[1] negotiated in 1930, which came into force on the expiration of the Mandate. Except that the Arabs are now in full executive control in Iraq, the passing of the Mandate has so far made little essential difference. The country still depends on Britain for its defence. Within recent years, two insurgent Kurdish chiefs were reduced with the help of the British Air Force, and could not have been reduced without it.[2] If the Persians, for instance, wished to seize Basrah; if the Wahhabis under Ibn Saud, who is greatly impoverished through the failure of the Hajj in recent years, wished to repeat their century-old Puritanic exploit of looting the enormous wealth of the Shiah Holy Cities in Iraq; if the Turks were minded to recover Mosul and the oilfields—the Iraqis, as in their quieter conversations they will frankly admit, would be unable at present to defend themselves. Iraq has no defensible frontiers except in the northern mountains—and the Arab soldier, generally speaking, is no mountaineer. Moreover, the Iraqi Air Force is still in swaddling clothes.

By letting Iraq go, Britain has to some extent sacrificed British trade interests there, but she has removed any danger that might have arisen from hostile nationalism. There is a tendency in Iraq to impose heavy taxation upon those goods and services which the Iraqi does not normally use; in other words, the foreigners are being taxed more heavily than the Iraqi, in spite of the fact that the average foreigner in the country spends more money and is a bigger employer of labour than the average Iraqi. Nor is it any means certain that the British Embassy in Baghdad is so fully alive to this tendency as it might be. So far as hostile nationalism is concerned, the danger might have disappeared had Britain after the war made up her mind and declared resolutely for a protectorate. But the adoption of the Mandate policy not merely encouraged the

[1] The text of this treaty will be found in Appendix A.

[2] For full description of the work of the British Air Force in preparing Iraq for independence, see Chapter VI.

honest and sincere Nationalists, but stimulated all the place-hunters in the country, so that by 1923 or 1924 it was impossible to go back.[1]

In any event, however, Britain has still safeguarded her communications with India, provided Iraq remains strong. Under the 1930 treaty the British Royal Air Force will remain in Iraq, but by 1937 all depots and stations must be moved west of the Euphrates. The present headquarters of the R.A.F. Iraq Command are at Hinaidi, a few miles south of Baghdad, and there is a bombing squadron based on Mosul—both on the Tigris. The new headquarters are to be at Dhibban, near Lake Habbaniyah, about fifty miles west of Baghdad, on the right bank of the Euphrates. At Basrah the present flying-boat and bomber bases will remain as a link with the Arabian coast and with the British naval division operating in the Persian Gulf. The present disposition of the Royal Air Force from the Mediterranean eastwards is as follows:

Mediterranean Command: Malta.
Middle East Command:
(*a*) Egypt—Aboukir, Alexandria, Heliopolis, Helwan, Ismailia, Khartum;
(*b*) Transjordan and Palestine—Ammam, Ramleh, Sarafand.
Iraq Command: Hinaidi, Basrah, Mosul.
India Command: Karachi, Lahore, Ambala, Peshawar, Kohat, Risalpur, Quetta.
Aden Command: Aden, Khormaksar.
Far East Command: Singapore, Kai Tak.

The R.A.F. "bridge" is thus strongly constructed, particularly as the desert is now not only fully surveyed, but is also studded with dumps and landing-grounds. Until recently the trans-desert motor communications were concentrated upon the Baghdad–Damascus route. Within the past year or so the British Government has been trying to develop the Baghdad–Amman–Jerusalem route, thus ensuring that the western end is under British control in Palestine instead of under French control in Syria. For there seems no early possibility that the Palestine Mandate will come to an end. Palestine thus is the western springer of the British arch from the Mediterranean to India. Whether from Egypt or from Cyprus, the new air and land route to the East starts from Palestine.

[1] See Chapter IV for a fuller discussion of this point.

The other springer of the arch is the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf. Down that side of the Gulf British influence is now consolidated. The sloops of the Persian Gulf Division of the East Indies Squadron continue the century-old work of keeping order on the pearling banks, dispensing justice, and generally showing the flag in those inhospitable waters. It is no easy task. When one of the sloops was detailed to report on Elphinstone Inlet as a proposed permanent anchorage for naval ships, the visit of inspection was paid in the month of August, with the humidity such that the visibility was only about a hundred yards. Not a soul was to be seen on shore; even the native Arabs cannot live there in the summer and retire to their hot-weather villages in the hills behind. Many of the engine-room staff went down with heat-exhaustion, and the "survivors" brought the ship out at half-speed.

Such is the summer climate at the southern end of the Persian Gulf, where the British sloops for generations and the R.A.F. for five years have done magnificent service to British Imperia linterests. For many years now the shaikhs of the key principalities of Kuwait, Bahrain and Muscat have been under British protection; but it is only within the last year or two that the shaikhs of the Trucial coast (Northern Oman) have been coaxed into the fold, with the result that British air communications between Basrah and India are now flanked by friendly Arab potentates, until the sea-jump from Sharjah to Gwadar in Baluchistan sees the fliers once again in British territory. The extension of this air route across India and farther has increased the Imperial importance of the Palestine–Basrah–Oman bridge.

Over all hangs the smell of oil. The Anglo-Persian Company renewed its concession in 1933, but a keen fight has been going on for the oil which is known to exist on the Arabian side of the coast. At Bahrain the concession—providing for royalties at the rate of just over five shillings per ton produced—has gone to a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company. On the Hasa coast the Standard Oil Company is busy. In Iraq, one small company, a subsidiary of the Anglo-Persian, is now producing, while two much bigger concerns have yet to make a start. The Anglo-Persian Company, in which the British Government is a major shareholder, has a $23\frac{3}{4}$ per cent holding in the Iraq Petroleum Company (with American, Dutch, and

French interests equally represented, the balance of 5 per cent being held by the original concessionaire), and appears to be in complete control of the administration on the spot. Soon the pipe-line from Northern Iraq to the Mediterranean will be working, with one terminus, as insisted on by the French, on the Syrian and another on the Palestine coast. This latter terminus is at Haifa, which within ten years is bound to become one of the great ports of the Mediterranean, and in all probability an important British naval base. The other big company, the British Oil Development Company, is still prospecting.

There has been, for some considerable time, talk of a Haifa–Baghdad railway. Such a railway would greatly help in the consolidation of British influence in the Middle East, especially in the event of a hostile Russo-Turkish alliance. A Haifa–Baghdad–Basrah railway would tend to cut out the Suez route; it would open up the Iraqi and Persian markets to the West; it would become the new passenger route to India—once the Baghdad–Basrah railway was relaid on standard gauge. The projected railway would follow the line of the pipe-line—Haifa–Tiberias–Haditha—thence turning south-east to Baghdad. Already a great trans-desert telephone has been constructed under British auspices.

France, from her position in Syria, is showing a good deal of jealousy of these developments of British policy, some of which she did not foresee during the war-time negotiations. It is true that the French appeared to triumph when they drove Faisal from Damascus in 1920, but his dynasty is now firmly established in Baghdad, and in so far as it owes the maintenance of its position to Britain, to that extent it is bound to carry Iraq in the wake of British policy. Of that policy a strong Iraq is a vital part—as a buffer between British Imperial communications and any possibility of pressure from or through Turkey or Persia—and in the nature of things no one will derive more benefits from a strong Iraq than the Iraqis themselves. Iraq's steady progress towards independence and strength added to the French difficulties in Syria. The Syrians rightly consider themselves a more advanced people than the Iraqis, and they did not understand why they should not be regarded as equally ready for independence. It may be that before long France will be willing to give up the Syrian Mandate on condition that she

retains full control of the coast. Already French jealousy is apparent in the efforts she has made to attract Iraqi and Persian transit trade to Beyrouth, where the French have promised both these Governments free port facilities—the implication being that the French fear the rise of Haifa.

There remains one aspect for consideration—the views and aspirations of the Arabs. The overland British route to the East is straddled by the Arab peoples. They claim to be the rightful inheritors of Palestine, they govern Iraq, they rule the coast from Basrah to Muscat, as well as the whole of Central Arabia. There has been much talk of "Arab union" or "Arab confederation." The Arab is a great talker.[1] Whether sitting in a coffee shop or in an editor's chair, there is nothing he likes so much, nothing at which he is such an adept, as political speculation. Now the idea of a great Arab confederation has fired the imagination of the politicians in all the Arab countries, and this idea is one that must be carefully watched by Britain. It must always be borne in mind that the forcing-house of the war brought Arab nationalism to fruition long before it could otherwise have reached this stage. Some of the Arabs themselves feel that they may be moving ahead rather fast; it is certain that the great mass of them, illiterate as they are and devoid of political consciousness, have no interest in anything except being allowed to carry on their lives in their own way and by their own ancient methods.

A further point to be noted is that the very nature of the Arab himself will militate against any form of union or even of federation. The Arab's nature is to be independent and distrustful—frequently even of his relatives. The desert life is a hard life, and through countless generations it has not left many of the finer characters except family affection and hospitality. Suspicion it breeds in large measure. Who knows what enemies may lie behind the next sand

[1] There are, in fact, departmental regulations which forbid Iraqi Government officials to receive their friends during office-hours, owing to the waste of time that ensues. If you call on business, the first thing the official does, is to ring for coffee. It is in the fine Arab tradition of hospitality, but clearly it can be abused. For the Arab comes slowly to the point. A man who calls on even urgent business will sit for a very long time uttering trivialities before beginning his devious approach to the subject. To rush a discussion is impolite.

dune or in ambush in the next *wadi*? Four hundred years of Ottoman rule merely intensified this secrecy and suspicion in which the Arabs had lived and worked. Frankly, it is almost impossible to imagine any gathering of Arab representatives who will not give individual promises or take individual action in diametrical opposition to what they have unanimously and solemnly decided in council half an hour earlier.

Some Iraqis used to argue for a joint Syro-Iraqi kingdom under the late King Faisal. This project might have had the support of influential elements in Syria anxious to see the French getting out. But many Iraqis, perhaps seeing more clearly, argued that union with Syria would be a mistake. Iraq is no doubt potentially richer than Syria, but the Syrians are more advanced than the Iraqis, and union would mean that the Syrians would simply move across to Baghdad and pick up the best jobs, returning in due time to their own pleasanter country. Such a prospect naturally does not commend itself to the Iraqis, who are looking for advancement themselves. At all events, the death of King Faisal put an end, for a time at least, to all talk of such union. So far as the Arabs in Palestine are concerned, they are too much occupied with their Jewish question to be really interested in any schemes for union. Transjordan scarcely counts. Abdullah its ruler, is an elder brother of the late King Faisal, and of recent years there has been no love lost between him and Ibn Saud, who ejected his family from Mecca. Ibn Saud counts for a great deal in any speculation on Arabia's future, but his country is terribly backward—it is only recently that acute economic distress and financial stringency induced him and his advisers to abandon their age-old objection to foreign industrial concessions. In any case, the freer Arabs of Syria and Iraq are by no means certain that domination from Mecca would be good for a united Arab "nation." The Gulf shaikhs realize fully that their influence is stronger as it is to-day than it would be as minor members of an "Arab League."

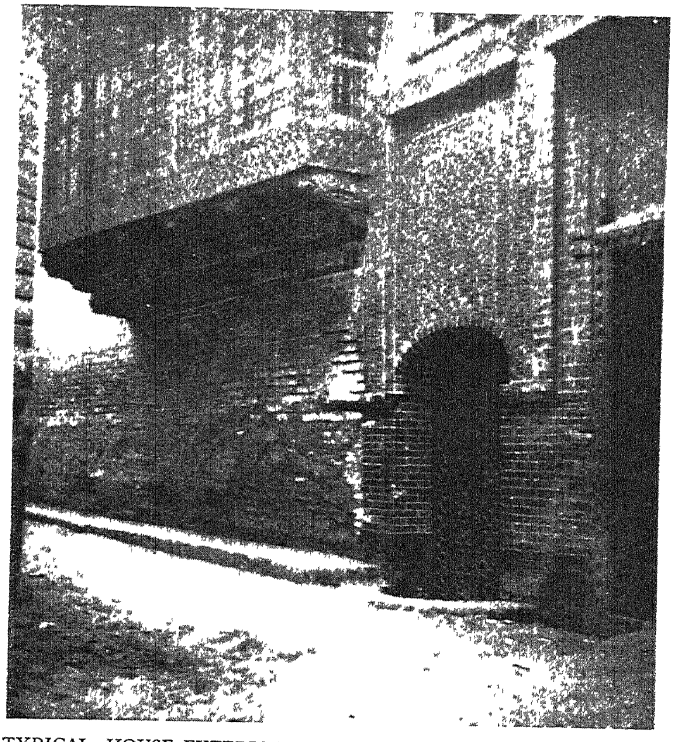
There is thus no immediate likelihood of Arab union. The Baghdad and Damascus newspapers have been from time to time full of the idea, and no doubt certain leaders and others, on both sides of the desert, are supporting it, with their eye on the main chance. But it is not yet within the sphere of practical politics.

British relations are cordial with all the Arab rulers on the Mediterranean–Oman route. The Indian political service, the navy, the army, and the air force have all contributed to this result. France, Germany, and the United States are all watching closely the consolidation of the new British bridge to the East.

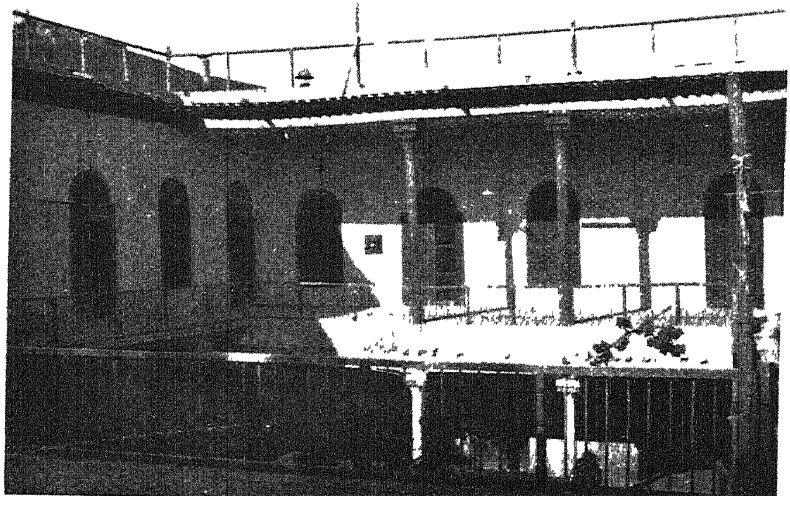
Of the countries constituting this bridge, Palestine is to-day the most prosperous and the one with the brightest future. She has agriculture and industries and manufactures; in the Dead Sea are valuable chemical resources; the coast has two good ports, one of which will soon become a first-class port. In addition, Palestine's invisible exports, the money spent by tourists, have been considerable even in these years of slump. When the world depression comes to an end, and Haifa with its harbour and oil-refineries attains its full development, Palestine should be prosperous indeed. One of the secrets of Palestine's success, apart from British administration, is the fact that the returning Jews have put things on a European or American basis. Other Middle East countries have progressed in their own way; Palestine has gone ahead on Western lines, and the native Arab has had no share in this. Arab nationalism in Palestine is very real and very conscious of itself, but its mainspring is its hostility to Zionism; it is not constructive, and even in its destructive criticism it often wanders far from realities. Both in natural resources and in industrial and commercial development Palestine is the "promising" land.

Syria is peopled by a clever race, who since the Crusades have been closely connected with the West, particularly with France. In Damascus she possesses the flower of the Arab world—that lovely city which the Prophet himself would not enter lest he spoil his delight later in Paradise. Syria's trade is considerable, and when the pipe-line begins work the port of Tripoli will handle the French share of the total production. But economically Syria can compare neither with Palestine nor Iraq. She is relatively poor, and it is becoming more and more evident that France's chief interest is in controlling the coast and the mountains immediately behind it.

Iraq is the only portion of the former Ottoman territory that has achieved independence. The British community in Iraq are apt to say that the efficiency of the administration will diminish. The Arab reply to that would be that if their administration remains at



TYPICAL HOUSE-EXTERIOR, WITH STUDDED DOOR, AND NO WINDOWS BELOW THE FIRST FLOOR



a standard which satisfies them, that is all that is necessary. So far as Britain is concerned, she is satisfied that it is to her interest to have a strong, friendly and peaceful Iraq on the flank of the new route to the East, and she has decided that she can ensure this more cheaply by encouraging Iraq's self-government than by enforcing a protectorate.

CHAPTER III

LAWRENCE AND THE ARABS OF IRAQ

THE policy, the personality and the money of T. E. Lawrence exercised a decisive influence upon the future of Iraq. Lawrence and his school of thought wanted independence *pur sang* for the Arabs. Others, no less competent judges, emphasized that any new Arab states that might come into existence, whether independent or not, must possess economic unity and therefore must be given scientific frontiers. From 1917 onwards the two ideas came into even sharper opposition; for a time in 1919–20, when the air was full of Woodrow Wilson, it seemed as if Lawrence's main preoccupation was to find thrones for his Sharifian allies, the sons of King Hussain. But by that time the diplomatic machine—aided by the *Realpolitik* of Clemenceau—was regaining control of the situation, and the Middle East, which to Lawrence was the be-all and the end-all, resumed its place and relative importance, as a pawn in the bigger game.

The sentimental influence which the desert and the desert people exert upon some Westerners is remarkable. Lawrence by temperament was strongly affected by it, but if it had stopped at that his authority and fame would not have equalled that of one or two other "Lawrences," who on the eastern side of the desert did work comparable with his, but of whose achievements, even names, the public at large have heard little. Leachman, for instance, was a legendary figure on the Mesopotamian side of the desert, where for years, even before the war, he had been out-Lawrencing Lawrence.

Gerald E. Leachman, who when he was murdered held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, C.I.E., D.S.O., in the Royal Sussex Regiment, had a long and distinguished pre-war record as a traveller in Arabia. He reported to the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force early in 1915 as Political Officer. He was in Kut, but was sent out by Townshend, who thus deprived himself of services which might have stood him in good stead at the time of the surrender.[1] From that time onwards

[1] Lawrence, curiously enough, comes into this picture. He was despatched with Aubrey Herbert to negotiate a panic-offer by the British Cabinet of £2,000,000 to the Turks provided that the Kut Garrison of thirteen thousand

Leachman's life was spent not as a paymaster among allies but among hostile or troublous tribesmen. His name was known throughout the length and breadth of Arabia. His extreme mobility, which made his legendary fame, caught the fancy of the Arabs; his indomitable will and inexhaustible energy forced their admiration, wholehearted if at times reluctant. Hundreds of parents called their children by his name. He was murdered in cold blood by a recalcitrant shaikh in August 1920 but his name and reputation still live throughout Arabia.[1] A contemporary was E. B. Soane, a banker who became a great political officer and administrator. His line of country was Kurdish rather than Arab, his work was every whit as important as that of Lawrence, if less flashy.[2] He died at sea in 1923; and who has heard of him? So too with a dozen others, expert linguists and travellers, men who were before the war in the political service *de carrière* and knew Arabia like a book. They had no money to disburse, and thus aroused no cupidity among the Arabs—whose cupidity, especially of gold, needs little arousing and rapidly grows insatiable. There was, for instance, Captain W. H. I. Shakespeare, C.I.E., an officer of the Indian Political Department, known throughout Arabia as "Skaishpeer." This experienced and much-travelled officer was sent out, before the Turkish war began, to get into touch with Ibn Saud, who in the early months of 1914 had begun to turn against the Turk and whose star, if Britain had but realized it, was already rising. Shakespeare was sent to ginger up Ibn Saud and he was able to report, in January 1915, that Ibn Saud was with Britain. But in the same month, in an inconclusive battle at Jarrab[3] between

officers and men were liberated on parole. This poltroon offer, which the Turks declined, was not published in the British Press.

[1] See footnote on p. 75 for Leachman's splendid work during the 1920 rebellion, when he kept the Upper Euphrates calm without an anna to spend on bribes.

[2] See A. T. Wilson, II, p. 83: "He played on . . . their personal honour. He scorned to excite cupidity with gold, as was done during the war in western Arabia: he knew well that men do not respond for long to such a stimulant, which has to be administered in ever-increasing quantity and brings demoralization in its train."

[3] See Philby, *Heart of Arabia*, I, p. 386: ". . . judged by its results, the battle of Jarrab was one of the decisive battles of the Arabian theatre of war, and the death of Shakespeare, followed as it was by the abandonment of all attempts to use Ibn Saud for the furtherance of our campaign against the Turks, put an end once and for all to the hopes of Arab co-operation

Ibn Saud and his then rival, the pro-Turkish chief Ibn Rashid of Hayil, Shakespeare was killed. Had fate not thus ordained that at one stroke Ibn Saud should be temporarily checked and this trusted officer killed, the British Government at that early stage would have been bound to recognize Ibn Saud as the principal power in Central and Southern Arabia, and the idea of raising the Sharifians would not have occurred to anyone. For the ambitions of Ibn Saud and Hussain were mutually incompatible, and the subsequent years have amply proved which was the abler and the stronger ruler.

But speculation is vain. The thread of accident that runs through human affairs put the control of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force into the hands of the Government of India, which looked to its own interests and could not see beyond the Persian Gulf. The Palestine campaign was the affair of London, and by 1916 the mixed success of the Mesopotamian campaign had begun to load the dice in favour of the Arab Bureau in Cairo, which had got largely into the control of dilettantes and scholars in whose hands the moulding of policy seemed increasingly to lie.

It was thus easy for Cairo in 1915 and 1916 to exercise inordinate influence upon British war policy against the Turks, and the irony of things finally saw to it that the scandalous mismanagement of certain aspects of the Mesopotamian campaign appeared to justify, in the eyes of the British public, its Cinderella-like relegation. Added to all this, Lawrence gradually became a figure of romantic mystery, soon to grow into a legend. Finally he himself set the seal upon his reputation by emerging as one of the great writers of English prose.

What are the facts?

Kitchener had come from Egypt and the close association that had always existed between Cairo and Mecca led him to exaggerate

in the war which were not to be revived until eighteen months had elapsed, and were then revived in a different quarter with such remarkable results. It was left to Lawrence and the army of the Hidjaz to accomplish what in other circumstances—with a little better luck, and a little more imagination on the part of the authorities responsible for the conduct of the Mesopotamian campaign—might have been accomplished by Ibn Saud and Shakespeare. Under the star-spangled vault of the Arabian sky he lies as he fell on the field of Jarrab—a true friend of the Arabs as every Arab knows in Central Arabia."

the importance of the Amir Hussain, who controlled the Holy Places. In the autumn of 1914 he approached the old man—"that very difficult person," as even Lawrence called him—and thus began "the MacMahon correspondence." Sir Henry MacMahon was Acting High Commissioner and through him Kitchener sounded Abdullah, Hussain's second son,[1] as to the attitude of the Sharif his father in the event of a war between Turkey and the Allied Powers. On the day that Turkey entered the war, Hussain was assured that there would be no international intervention in Arabia. This was scarcely acceptable to the old man and in due course (1915) he demanded that Britain should guarantee the independence of all Arab lands in return for his revolt against the Ottoman. The lands he referred to covered the whole of the peninsula, the northern "boundary" being latitude 37, including therefore Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Southern Kurdistan. This of course was mere bazaar-bargaining, and in due and seemly manner Britain declined to agree. But by the autumn Britain was offering an assurance that, subject to safeguarding French interests in Syria and British interests in Mesopotamia, she would support Arab independence in the southern portions of the enormous area he had delimited.

When Turkey joined in the war, Ibn Saud's position was clear. He was anti-Turkish and pro-British, all he wanted being a British treaty to secure him against any unlucky turn of fortune's wheel. Hussain's position was not so simple, as the Hidjaz railway brought the Turks to his doorstep—the Turkish garrison remained in Medina until the war ended. According to the fatuous "biography" of King Faisal written by Mrs. Steuart Erskine, Hussain began by flirting with both sides. She quotes the full authority of King Faisal for this.[2] According to her statement, when the war broke out the Young Turk Party were trying to plot against Hussain in the Hidjaz. The documents, by a process not unusual in Arab countries, were all handed to Hussain, who then sent his third son, the Amir Faisal, to Constantinople in order to present the documents to the Grand Vizier and so get the conspiracy scotched (*op. cit.*, p. 40). This was in April 1915, when he was already in communication with Kitchener. Faisal's *real* object (*op. cit.*, p. 40) was to study the

[1] Now Amir of Transjordan.

[2] *King Faisal of Iraq*, by Mrs. Steuart Erskine, pp. 38 et seq.

situation in Syria, where Damascus was the centre of an Arab nationalist and anti-Turk movement. At Constantinople Faisal obtained official support against the Hidjaz plotters, but (p. 43) when he also discovered that the Turks "were at that moment carrying their archives and their treasures into Anatolia I decided then to join the extremists and to return at once to Mecca to help my father to save Arabia. . . . My father agreed, moved by the sufferings of the Arabs and at the same time hoping to assure their political future." Hussain already had the first British undertaking. Satisfied by now that the Ottoman power in Arabia was gone beyond recall, he put his demands to the Allies high.[1] But the statement quoted goes on to say (*op. cit.*, p. 45) that on returning to Damascus in the month of September 1915, Faisal found that the Turks had the Arab nationalist movement well under their thumb. It was doubtless this news that persuaded Hussain that his demand for the 37th degree of latitude had better be forgotten. Not until May 1916 did Faisal return to the Hidjaz and a week later the Hidjaz revolt began. All that Hussain really wanted, or hoped to secure, was complete independence in his own corner of south-western Arabia, British support against his rival Ibn Saud, and as a corollary the unfettered control of the great pilgrim revenues.

The attitude of the French, it is important here to note, was a vital factor in the situation. The war in Europe was not going well; France had century-old interests in Syria and the Lebanon; she was inclined to think that Britain, by withholding troops from the French front, might begin to build up an impregnable position in the Middle East and so present the ultimate peace negotiators with a *fait accompli* of colonial advantage. The French view therefore was one of which Britain was bound to take account. The Gallipoli evacuation, too, with its release of thousands of Turks, was a further factor that had to be considered.

Lawrence, studying the progress of the war, had come to the conclusion that, to enable the British campaign in Palestine to go through to its end, Arab irregulars must be raised to work on the flank. Cairo from the start had been thinking in terms of Mecca, and so it comes about that Lawrence begins his *Revolt in the Desert* by describing how he went down to Jiddah with Storrs to make

[1] See *supra*, p. 53.

a start with his new Anglo-Arab "alliance" and how he found his heaven-sent Arab leader in Faisal. Lawrence's idea was to develop an Arab guerrilla movement, working up the Hidjaz railway and harassing the Turks on the right flank of the British thrust from Egypt across the Canal into Palestine. His implements in forging this new British arm were his persuasive powers, his electric personality and his gold—a crescendo of arguments which no Arab born could resist.

Opportunity, it is said, comes but once to a man. If it is true, then Faisal owed his career to his friend Lawrence, but for whom he would have remained a simple Amir in the Hidjaz. Hussain himself was too old to take the field in an arduous campaign. His eldest son Ali had responsibilities, as the eldest son, which would keep him in the south near the capital. What of Abdullah, the second son? Lawrence met Abdullah soon after he landed, riding on a white mare, the mark of Arab nobility. The rebellion of Hussain had been hanging fire for some time and Lawrence suspected, as he has recorded, that its lack was leadership—"not intellect, nor judgment, nor political wisdom, but the flame of enthusiasm that would set the desert on fire." Even as they talked, Lawrence decided that Abdullah was not his man.

What of Faisal, the third son? The name Faisal means "the flash of the sword in its downward stroke," and Lawrence was soon to put him to the test. Lawrence's description of the first interview is historic.

A lengthy camel-ride brought him to Faisal's camp. A slave with silver-hilted sword was on guard, and Lawrence was led within to an inner court, on whose farther side, "framed between the uprights of a black doorway, stood a white figure waiting tensely for me. I felt at first glance that this was the man I had come to Arabia to seek—the leader who would bring the Arab Revolt to full glory. Faisal looked very tall and pillar-like, very slender, in his long white silk robes and his brown headcloth bound with a brilliant scarlet and gold cord. His eyelids were dropped; and his black beard and his colourless face were like a mask against the strange, still watchfulness of his body. His hands were crossed in front of him on his dagger."

Faisal was then, in 1916, thirty-one years of age. He looked older,

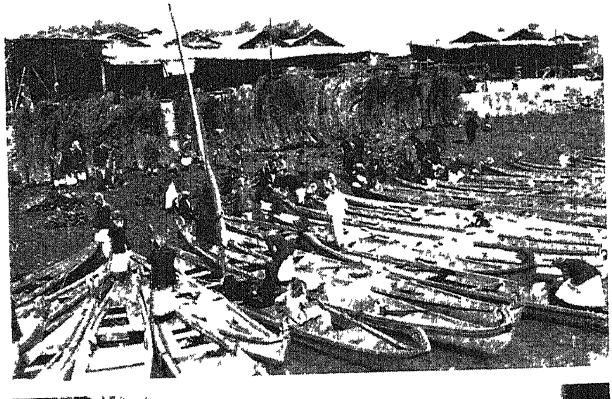
as Lawrence says. His hollow cheeks were deeply lined and puckered with reflection. "His nature grudged thinking, for it crippled his speed in action. . . . In appearance he was tall graceful and vigorous, with the most beautiful gait, and a royal dignity of head and shoulders. Of course he knew it, and a great part of his public expression was by sign and gesture. . . . His personal charm . . . made him the idol of his followers. One never asked if he were scrupulous; but later he showed that he could return trust for trust, suspicion for suspicion." Here, says Lawrence, was "offered to our hand, which had only to be big enough to take it, a prophet who, if veiled, would give cogent form to the idea behind the activity of the Arab revolt. It was all and more than we had hoped for, much more than our halting course deserved. The aim of my trip was fulfilled." In this way then, for better or for worse, Faisal's destinies were linked with those of Britain.

Lawrence's electric personality had convinced the Meccan leaders that they might soon be rulers in the pleasant land of Syria, and in their own country where their writ ran they had no difficulty in organizing a force which by July 1917 had taken them to Akaba. In all probability that would have been their limit, but for the lure of Damascus held before the leaders and the money and loot promised to the rank and file.

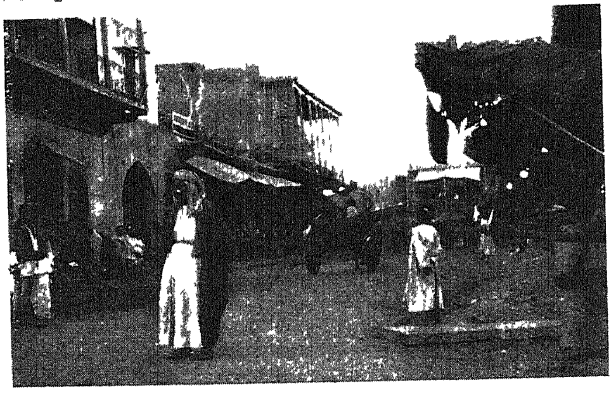
More strange than his powers of persuading the Arabs was Lawrence's success in persuading the British Command to place enormous sums in English gold at his unfettered disposal, and to accept his guerrilla assistance on the flank. Such a supply of money was necessary if the Arabs were to be persuaded to move at all to help the British arms. At the first interview with Abdullah, to which reference has just been made, Lawrence in the first pages of *Revolt in the Desert* tells how Storrs and Abdullah "talked about money." Later, when he joined Faisal and his levies he refers to the Sharif's payment to each man of two pounds a month and four for a camel —"nothing else," he records, "would have performed the miracle of keeping a tribal army in the field for five months on end." Before long he is writing, "Profitable rumours excited the army" and these, trickling round the desert, brought in a great array of minor tribal chiefs, all anxious to liberate the Arabs—at a price to be paid by the British. Indeed the only day on which a full muster of the Arab



INFORMAL ABLUTIONS,
ASHAR CREEK, BASRAH



BASRAH'S BELLUM



STREET SCENE,
MOSUL

allies could be counted on was pay-day. In his Chapter XIV Lawrence analyses the psychology of the great fighting shaikh Auda: "I suggested that Auda's present expenses in hospitality must be great; would it help if I advanced something of the great gift Feisal would make him, personally, when he arrived? Auda saw that the immediate moment would not be unprofitable; that Feisal would be highly profitable: and that the Turks would always be with him if other resources failed. So he agreed, in a very good temper, to accept my advance." Thus Lawrence on his Arabs. In his Chapter XII he describes his "comic interview" with Allenby, at which he asked the Commander-in-Chief for "stores and arms and a fund of two hundred thousand sovereigns to convince and control his converts." This conversion and control of the Arabs in the task of liberating the Arab races turned out to be even more costly, for in Chapter XXV he goes down to tell Faisal that Allenby had "put three hundred thousand pounds into my independent credit." But money to Britain mattered little in those days, and the military stalemate in Europe was such that any possibility of movement elsewhere was to be encouraged. Even the military suspicion of his free-lance methods melted or was brushed aside. But in point of fact, had Lawrence never existed, had the Arab revolt against the Turks, which had started locally and in a small way before Lawrence hitched it to the British arms, never gone beyond the area of the Holy Places, the collapse of the Central Powers in 1918 would still have put Allenby into Damascus and Aleppo before the end of the year. It is true that Lawrence and his Arabs did work of great value, their railway-cutting and other exploits making them important auxiliaries. But in 1916–17 it was not foreseen that as the major struggle developed, the military situation in the Middle East at the end of 1918 would still have been the same, Arabs or no Arabs, Lawrence or no Lawrence.

But later developments would have been vastly different. The Arab Bureau in Cairo never gave sufficient attention to the other facets of the Arab situation. They had little interest in the ferment that was going on in Central Arabia or on the Mesopotamian side of the desert.

What Lawrence did therefore was to start tendencies and release forces which are not yet worked out to their end. He raised problems

infinitely more difficult than those he solved. His ideas had much to do with the Sykes–Picot agreement of May 1916, in which the British negotiator was Sir Mark Sykes, that strange romanticist who flitted from campaign to campaign as a half-official, half-unofficial free-lance. By this agreement Syria (with Mosul[1]) would go to France after the war, Baghdad and Basrah to Britain, the territories to the south would be independent Arab. This did not in the main conflict with the British undertaking given to Hussain in the middle of 1915, with which he had apparently been satisfied. By July 1917 the now-organized revolt in the desert saw the Arabs in Akaba, and Lawrence exercising himself to ensure their perseverence to Damascus.[2] In Iraq General Maude had already entered Baghdad (March 11th) and had issued a proclamation, drawn up by Sir Mark Sykes, a turgid even ridiculous document, an essential point of which made Basrah British and Baghdad Arab—at complete variance with the Sykes–Picot agreement of a few months earlier.

Young in his book *The Independent Arab*, in keeping with his thesis, suggests (p. 275) that the announcement that the Baghdad *vilayet* was to be an Arab state meant that "His Majesty's Government were already beginning to realize that direct British administration was incompatible with the satisfaction of Arab ideals." But in March 1917 the situation was purely military. The people of Mesopotamia were accustomed to the idea of victors keeping what they had won. Others thought, or hoped, that the Turks might return. In the west Lawrence and Faisal had not even reached Akaba. In March 1917 there was no Arab demand for an Arab state in the Baghdad *vilayet*. The only Arab nationalists who counted were Faisal's officers, and their immediate interest was with Law-

[1] More than half Kurdish.

[2] Philby, *op. cit.*, I, p. 226. "The dream of an Arabian Empire under his own rule was in those days a pet obsession of King Hussain, but he (has) lived to realize that those castles were built in the air to be shattered, not so much by those who resisted his ambitions from the beginning as by the son (Faisal) to whom he had entrusted the command of his northern army, and who from the day of Akaba (July 1917), if not before, had determined to carve out a kingdom for himself independently of his father's schemes." It is of interest to quote Lawrence's authority (*Revolt in the Desert*, Chap. XXIX) for the fact that the Arab officers' commissions were issued by Faisal and not by Hussain.

rence and their eyes were on Syria and Damascus. Towards the end of 1917, having been given such a definite lead by the Sykes proclamation which General Maude issued, these officers, who were already bound by a "Syrian Covenant," drew up a "Covenant of Iraq," in which they pegged out their claim to a possible new distribution of British political bounty. It may indeed have struck some of them that British subsidies would be available in Iraq on the same scale as that to which they were accustomed on the other side of the desert.

The new year brought Woodrow Wilson into the Middle East. His Fourteen Points were given to the world on January 8, 1918. The Twelfth Point referred directly to the Ottoman territories and appeared (in the words of A. T. Wilson[1]) to "substitute nationality, religion or race as the basis of Government in the Middle East in the place of ability and power to govern." It stated that the nationalities then under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development. This principle did not square with the British agreement with Hussain, or the Sykes–Picot agreement, or General Maude's proclamation, or (in a different way) the Balfour Declaration (November 1917) favouring the establishment within Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people. The Woodrow Wilson ideas, however, spread like wildfire and Arab nationalism received such a stimulus as it had not known from the days of its sketchy beginnings in the years before Enver and Talaat seized the reins of power on the Bosporus.

In the summer the Arab officers of the "Syrian Covenant" presented a memorial to the British Government and were told that in regard to the areas in Arabia which were free and independent before the War, and areas emancipated from Turkish rule *by the action of the Arabs themselves during the war*, the British Government recognized the complete and sovereign independence of the Arabs inhabiting those areas and supported them in their struggle for freedom.[2] This was in June. It was about this time that Faisal,

[1] Now Sir Arnold Wilson, M.P.

[2] Author's italics. See Young (*op. cit.*, p. 277), who remarks that whoever drafted this reply could never have dreamt that within five months the Arabs would have taken part in the capture of Aleppo, five hundred

who, as we have seen on page 53, had begun by flirting with both sides, began to wonder whether he was backing the wrong horse. A Turkish emissary came down from Damascus, and with him Faisal entered into negotiations, although he was still Lawrence's ally as he had been for months and was still in receipt of British *largesse* as he had been for over a year. Liddell Hart in his *T. E. Lawrence* (pp. 317–18) tells the story how Faisal promised the Turks that he would forsake the British side "if the Turks would evacuate Amman and hand over the province to the Arabs." The bird in the hand was clearly worth two in Damascus! It is strange to reflect that had things gone badly with Britain and her Allies in that summer of 1918 Faisal might, in spite of Lawrence, have taken that plunge—it is a fascinating speculation. But the German structure in the West was soon to start cracking. The Turks were soon completely on the run, both in Syria and Mesopotamia. Allenby was in Aleppo on October 26th. The British Command in Baghdad received orders on November 2nd to occupy Mosul under the terms of the Armistice with Turkey, which provided for the cessation of hostilities on October 31st. Faisal was still an Ally of the British. He had had a narrow escape.

The sixteenth clause of the Armistice provided for the surrender of all Turkish garrisons in the Hidjaz, Asir, Yemen, Syria and Mesopotamia to the nearest Allied commander.

What was a "garrison"? and was Mosul in Mesopotamia? These two questions suddenly became urgent, and they were boldly solved by General Marshall, in personal discussion with the Turkish commander in Mosul, whom he "persuaded" to move all his troops out of the *vilayet*. This put Mosul under British military control, and from now on the name Iraq came into use as the name of the territory comprising the Basrah, Baghdad and Mosul *vilayets*, whereas the old Greek term Mesopotamia strictly referred to the

miles away; and adds: "When I saw this document for the first time in the Foreign Office, it at once became clear to me why the Arabs had made such superhuman efforts to win their race with the British cavalry into Deraa, Damascus, and Aleppo. . . . I understood, too, for the first time why I had so often been asked, after the fall of Damascus, who had really taken the city. Was it the British army or was it our Lord Faisal?"

plain of the two rivers, that is Basrah and Baghdad only. Thus the beginning of 1918 saw the whole of the area covered by the Sykes–Picot agreement in British military occupation. In Iraq a British Civil Administration had been functioning *pari passu* with the advance of the troops. In Syria an autonomous Arab government under Faisal, with British advisers was set up in October, financed (according to A. T. Wilson) by the British Treasury at the rate of £150,000 a month—a continuation of the Lawrentian theory of *largesse* to which Faisal's Arabs were now beginning to think they had a prescriptive right.

The centre of gravity was now rapidly changing. The soldiers had ended their tasks, the armies had become mere custodians of law and order, and the diplomats and politicians were getting to work. In the Middle East the protagonists were Britain and France. Since the days of the Crusades France had been interested in Syria. British influence was well established in Lower Mesopotamia. The event of the war had, for all immediate purposes, put an end to Germany's thrust towards the Persian Gulf, and it appeared to open up new prospects for Italy and Greece in the Levant. The Sykes–Picot agreement, by giving Mosul to the French, had inserted a buffer between the British on the Tigris and Euphrates and any Russian conquest around Van. But the two revolutions of 1917 had caused Russia to disappear from the scene, Italy was encouraged to look for her chief war-gains at the head of the Adriatic and in Tirol, Greece had her eyes directed upon Smyrna and the Islands. Britain and France had big fish to fry and the Middle East became of secondary interest. To Lawrence the independence of the Arabs was still of prime importance. He felt that Britain still had a duty to his Sharifian friends, and he was to become more and more resentful of British policy as he saw his promises to the Arabs being modified one by one.

The Arabophile school found support in the doctrinaire theories of Woodrow Wilson. The great public enthusiasm for these theories, due in part to the nervous reaction from the intensive discipline and the repressive strain of four years of war, forced the realists in France and Britain to issue, on November 8, 1918, the document which has come to be known as "the Anglo-French Agreement."

It was published in London, Paris, Cairo and New York and ran as follows:

> The end which France and Great Britain have in view in their prosecution in the East of the war let loose by German ambition is the complete and definite liberation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national Governments and Administrations drawing their authority from the initiative and free choice of indigenous populations.
>
> In order to give effect to these intentions France and Great Britain are agreed to encourage and assist in the establishment of indigenous Governments and Administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia, which have already in fact been liberated by the Allies, and in countries whose liberation they are endeavouring to effect, and to recognize the latter as soon as they shall be effectively established. Far from wishing to impose any particular institution on these lands, they have no other care but to assure by their support and effective aid the normal working of the Governments and Administrations, which they shall have adopted of their free will. To ensure impartial and equal justice, to facilitate economic developments by evoking and encouraging indigenous initiative, to foster the spread of education and to put an end to the divisions too long exploited by Turkish policy—such is the rôle which the two Allied Governments assume in the liberated territories.

This document took its place in the series of undertakings given to the Arabs. It promised a "free choice," but in fact no free choice was possible. Palestine was an Arab country, but the war-necessity which had forced the Balfour Declaration made it impossible for the Arabs to bar the entry of Jews from abroad. No "free choice" for non-Arab minorities was at any time likely, nor has it in the event been granted anywhere. The declaration was in fact an attempt to do lip-service to the doctrines of Woodrow Wilson while Clemenceau and Lloyd George were getting on with the business. Lawrence's advice was that three Arab states under the Sharifian brothers[1] should be set up—Syria, Upper Mesopotamia and Lower Mesopotamia. Economically and geographically Iraq is one: any division, into Upper and Lower, with duplicate courts and governments, would merely have doubled the financial burden upon the

[1] The eldest of Hussain's four sons, Ali, was not in the running, being the heir to the throne of the Hidjaz. Hussain, his father, abdicated in October 1924 under pressure of Ibn Saud's attacks, and Ali reigned less than a year, then leaving Ibn Saud completely master of the Holy Places. He went to live in Baghdad and died there in February 1935.

people—unless of course it was expected that the British bounty would continue.

The essential point was that no "free choice" government that might be set up in those regions could be certain of maintaining order unless backed by a European Power. Without such backing, the setting up of Arab amirates or kingdoms would merely have extended the anarchy, always endemic in Arabia, to the more advanced northerly provinces, which under the Turks had at least been fairly orderly and in which traders had been able to count on a modicum of security and economic stability. Moreover, it is not clear what Woodrow Wilson had in mind when he spoke of the "initiative and free choice of indigenous populations." It is not possible to obtain any democratic political judgment in Arabia, partly because of lack of education and political consciousness, partly because of the secular cleavage between townsmen and tribesmen. At the most, all that can be obtained is the judgment (seldom unanimous) of the feudal oligarchy or of the priesthood. Neither is democratic in the Wilsonic sense, but they form a sounder basis for politics in Arabia than do Western democratic doctrines.[1]

As far as Iraq was concerned, the Acting Civil Commissioner, A. T. Wilson, argued that Lawrence's three-state solution was impracticable and that Iraq (Basrah, Baghdad and Mosul) should form one state. He attacked the "diplomatic insincerities" of the Declaration which, he said, placed "a potent weapon in the hands of those least fitted to control a nation's destinies." He emphasized the almost entire absence of political, racial or other connection between Iraq and the rest of Arabia and argued that the problem of Iraq should be settled independently of Arab problems elsewhere. This, in the pull-devil-pull-baker game at Versailles, was impossible. A. T. Wilson argued that Iraq neither expected nor desired this Woodrow Wilson independence. In December Clemenceau and Lloyd George, meeting in London, reached an agreement the details

[1] Miss Bell, writing to her father on November 28, said: "The Franco-British Declaration has thrown the whole town (Baghdad) into a ferment. . . . On two points they are practically all agreed, they want us to control their affairs and they want Sir Percy (Cox) as High Commissioner. Beyond that all is divergence."

of which had been under discussion for many weeks. The British Prime Minister demanded a British administration in Palestine and the transfer of Mosul (which the Sykes–Picot agreement had put in the French sphere) to the British. According to H. W. V. Temperley, in his *History of the Peace Conference*, Clemenceau agreed—on three conditions. These were that France should obtain a share in the oil which might be produced in Mosul, that Britain in these matters should support France against Woodrow Wilson, that if the newly fashionable Mandates were established, France should have that for Syria and the Lebanon—including Damascus, Aleppo, Alexandretta and Beyrouth.[1]

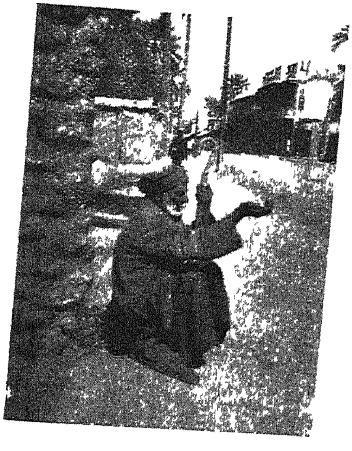
It was now manifest that the territorial assignments in the Middle East had definitely become pawns in the game. Lawrence was disgusted, the Arabs were thrown back on the old Arabian pastime, in which they were experts, of fishing to the best profit in the troubled waters.

In Syria, backed by the subventions from the British Treasury and helped by British advisers, Faisal's Arab administration had settled down to work. The British Foreign Office, well aware of the pressure which Woodrow Wilson was exerting in order to force his League Covenant, with its Mandate articles, upon the Allied peace-makers, was bound to meet France half-way. The major Anglo-French problems were European—the problem of reparations and the problem of the new map. It soon became clear to Faisal and his entourage that in their own interests they must prepare a second string to their bow, against the possibility, the probability, that the British Government would in the end decline to maintain them in Syria against the French. Apart from the political aspect, this possibility had a financial aspect which appeared to them most alarming. For if the Arab Government in Syria disappeared, there would disappear with it the British subsidy—if for no other reason than that the French would reasonably object to the continued British financing of the Arabs who then, disgruntled

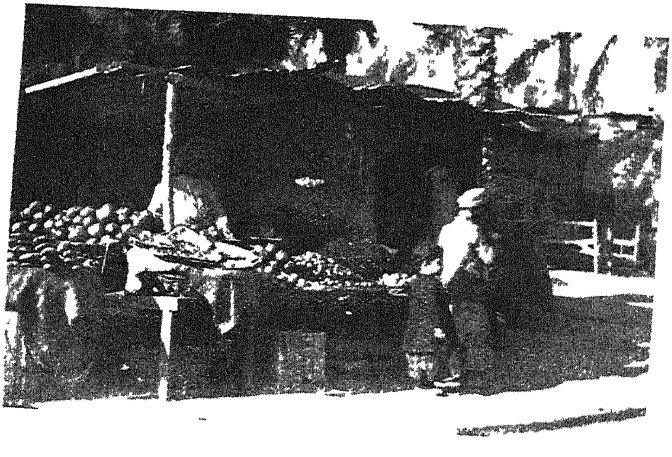
[1] The oil agreement was concluded in the following April. So far as Iraq was concerned France received a $23\frac{3}{4}$ per cent holding in the Turkish Petroleum Company (now the Iraq Petroleum Company) and agreed to British control of the pipe-line to the Mediterranean. This has now been modified, and in addition to the British pipe-line from Kirkuk to Haifa, France has her own bifurcation to Tripoli.



THE SELLER OF NUTS



THE CUPPED
HAND OF THE
BEGGAR



FRUIT STALL